

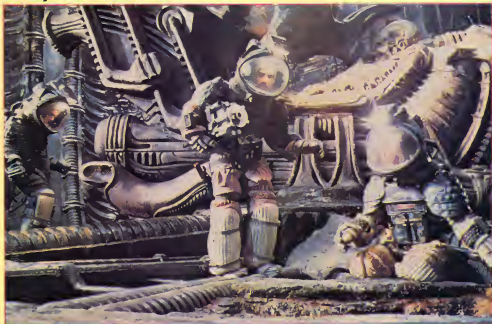
MORE ALIEN PAINTINGS BY RON COBB • BUCK ROGERS SPECIAL EFFECTS

# FANTASTIC FILMS™

The Magazine of Visual Fantasy and Science Fiction

\$2.00

SEPTEMBER/1979



# ALIEN IS HERE!

AND SCREENWRITER DAN O'BANNON TALKS ABOUT IT



**DIRECTOR ROBERT WISE (STAR TREK)  
INTERVIEWED • FIRST MEN IN THE MOON  
DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE**



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## GALACTICA DEFENDED

In reference to Mark Aronson's critique of *Battlestar Galactica*, I see nowhere in the Ten Commandments of filmmaking that "thou shalt not lift ideas from another film." If such was the case, the first movie produced would have been the last. There's hardly a Western that isn't replete with stoic hero, bad outlaw and golden-hearted heroine praying for her man, or a detective story without the rugged gumshoe, lady in distress, ever-present mob and police chief telling the detective to "let the Law handle this." There is no emotion or character type that hasn't been dealt with a million times. Does Mr. Aronson have a grudge against someone involved in *BG*, that he has to chop it up without crediting it with any redeeming value?

Since he saw fit to use ambiguous analogies, calling the characters "clones" of *Star Wars*, I feel I have the right to rebut with some of my own views:

**Han Solo and Starbuck:** Both gambler, both love a good time. But when danger strikes, Starbuck is always the first one to hop in his viper. Solo was mercenary till the end of the picture, and then it was guilt, not just loyalty, that got the better of him. Starbuck is angered by lack of loyalty and organization. Solo couldn't care less. Starbuck has real feelings. We never quite see Solo's humanity emerge.

**Luke Skywalker and Capt. Apollo:** Luke is a mere boy, with no direction in life until his guardians are killed. Apollo is a man with deep-rooted values. There is no question about his leadership qualities or his determination to overcome obstacles. And unlike Luke, he is never afraid to confront the unknown.

**Kenobi and Adama:** This is the silliest analogy of all. Both men are old and wise, but Kenobi was almost a prophet, his knowledge of the ethereal "Force," the booster shot necessary to defeat the Death Star. Adama is a normal man with no powers. He's simply a seasoned leader with shrewd insight into Cylon tactics. He knows that compromise is impossible, and flight and relocation the only solution under the circumstances.

As to the other analogies referred to by Aronson, I'll agree that there are parallels, but who cares? As I stated before, one can draw parallels endlessly between movies and their television take-

offs. But why pick on this particular program with such venomous intent? A myriad of programs have done the same thing, and no one blinks an eye. *Mork and Mindy* is a deliberate rip-off from *My Favorite Martian*, but I never see one word in print about that aspect of it. I suppose the reason is that *Star Wars* was big box office, and the fact that John Dykstra's animation adds to the similarity which brings me to another point.

Just what does Aronson have against Dykstra? What is wrong with the man going on to other endeavors where his style is blatantly apparent? The man is a genius! Belittling him for it is tantamount to telling Ingmar Bergman to



stop making philosophical films because he's already made several like that. Come on.

In regards to the zodiac and Egyptian symbols used on *BG*, there is nothing hard to understand about that. Actually, it's quite clever. After all, the idea IS that these homeless warriors probably found Earth and influenced the cultural development of our forefathers. As to the terminology used, I had no trouble figuring out what centons, sections, microns and yarons were. But I WAS in confusion as to what the heck a Star-date meant on *Star Trek*, and how about the photon torpedoes? They were never explained, either.

One last comment. The situations developed on *BG* at least try to maintain a sense of reality. This was not the case in *Star Trek*, where one nasty entity after another paraded around space looking

for the Enterprise, and no one, not even Mr. Spock, figured out how to destroy them until the last five minutes of the show. If Mr. Aronson wants to take pot shots, maybe he shouldn't compare *BG* with other shows that have their own absurdities.

*Battlestar*, despite its similarities to *Star Wars*, goes beyond that film's cardboard characters and situations to create a world that really COULD exist. The character relationships are endearing and multi-dimensional, and the plots present food for thought in this age of technology and computers, for even with all their technological knowledge, they couldn't change human nature enough to prevent war and greed and self-interest. What they are fleeing from isn't just the Cylons, it's from a society that failed because man could not reconcile emotion and intellect.

I feel sorry for Mr. Aronson, that he couldn't see beyond the "laws" of the show and comprehend its deeper significance. He reminds me of an audiophile who is so engrossed with fine-tuning the amps and pre-amps that he never even thinks about sitting down to enjoy the music.  
Kathy Criswell  
Griffith, Indiana

## KEEP 'EM COMIN'!

I hereby promise to write a letter for each and every forthcoming issue. How's that? I've just increased my literary output by eight pages per year.

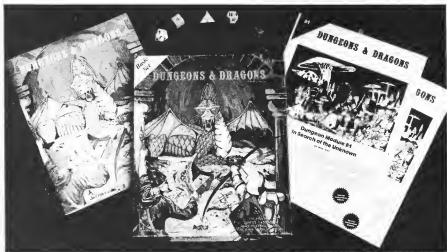
James Delson is your best writer. His articles always make for worthwhile reading, especially his series on SF on TV. By the way, *Dark Shadows* was shown in syndicated reruns a few years back.

I also enjoyed his interview with Robert Altman. Unfortunately, I was unable to see *Quintet* because its run in Chicago was so short. I think a better ad campaign would have helped. Until your interview, I had little idea of what it was about.

If Prof. Darktower's Pod Report was "top secret," how did you come to print it in *Fantastic Films*?

Thank you for the Jean Rogers interview. I fell in love with her a long time ago. I hope you continue the practice of mixing old with new. I'd also like to compliment you on the new, more worldly poster. I will enjoy very much the discontinuance of my long-winded

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bricking on this subject.

Now, about the cover.

The June issue had by far the WORST cover I've seen on a science fiction magazine. It reminded me of a *National Enquirer* cover. I really wish you'd decide what is your feature article for each issue and then FEATURE it on the cover. A little class can sell a magazine, too, ya' know. End of gripe (for now).

I really like this magazine, so, keep 'em comin'!

Brian Thomas  
Chicago, Illinois

### RARE EXCEPTION

I was pleased to see that James Delson, in his excellent continuing television survey, mentioned Michael Dunn, one of the best and most neglected of television actors.

Although he is often overlooked, Dunn has appeared in several SF/fantasy series, including *Star Trek*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, and as Delson mentioned, the most bizarre and enjoyable episodes of *The Wild Wild West*.

It is refreshing to see articles like Delson's that devote space to some of the lesser known, yet deserving efforts in the fields of science fiction and fantasy. Consequently, I am looking forward to his treatments of other neglected programs that I enjoy, like *The Prisoner*.

In most popular magazines, the repetitive coverage of the popular, mass-media productions often obscures the efforts of many fine artists and actors. Delson's articles are a rare and much needed exception.

Marcy Marzucki  
Athens, Ohio

### MAGAZINE FAN

First off, I would like to offer to you my congratulations on your fine magazine. I have bought all of your issues since the first one, and have never been disappointed in the contents (well, almost). To be truthful, I didn't think you would make it this far. At the time *Fantastic Films* first appeared on the stands it seemed as if everyone was trying to get on the SF wagon to make a quick buck. Most were; however good quality tends to increase the longevity of a product. As I read the first few issues, I wondered if you could sustain the quality of the magazine or would you be just another flash in the pan and disappear after a few good issues. Thankfully, that hasn't happened. Give yourself a gold star.

I would like to make a few comments on some of the letters in your Reaction column, which is really what got me to write in the first place. I cannot understand some of the rabid and almost paranoid comments some of the readers have to make. In the June issue Mr. Eichler goes off foaming at the mouth at the end of his letter in defense of *Space 1999*. The man had a legitimate com-

plaint about the interviewer James Delson. Delson was supposed to be conducting an interview with Glen Larson, not insinuating his own opinions into the interview, which is supposed to be a cardinal sin in journalism. Is Mr. Delson a reviewer or an interviewer? One cannot, or should not, be both at the same time.

The other thing that has me on a slow burn is the fact that both Mr. Eichler and Mr. Bates started their letters off by saying one magazine (*Starlog*) while praising yours. I read *Starlog*, *Future*, *Fantastic Films*, *Omni*, *Science Fantasy*, *Film Classics* and sometimes even *Famous Monsters*. Eichler doesn't like the editorial policy of *Starlog* and Bates doesn't like the format. What that has to do with *Fantastic Films* is neither here nor there. The point of the matter is that each of these fine magazines are dedicated to the field of fantasy and science



fiction in one form or another.

*Starlog* tries to cover something for everyone. *Future Life* tries to cover current issues in regard to the future. *Omni* covers the current in regard to the future while printing science fiction stories and science articles. *Starlog*, to me, is hardline SF. It covers more on what's happening right now, as much as they can find out, and how the things (SPFX) were done. *FF* covers much more of the animation articles and tends to try to get into and behind the persons involved with science fiction. *FF* and *Starlog* (for example), are two totally different approaches to the same field. That's like comparing apples to oranges. Both are good in the area they set out to approach. If all the magazines published covered the field in the same way with the same articles it would be a real bore.

The same goes for the *Space 1999* and *Star Trek* fans. I really believe these guys would go at each other with anything they had if someone would rope off an area and tell them to go at it. I refuse to compare *Space 1999*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica* and/or any other SF presentation with one

another. You should be able to take each one individually—criticize each one on its own merits and failings. That I could understand, but the ego-building holier-than-thou attitude that many of these fans have is sheer crap and I won't listen to anyone who tries to peddle this garbage type mentality to me. To me it is all science fiction, some good, some bad, most mediocre. I pick out what I like and enjoy it without having to attack something else to justify my tastes.

I do like most of the letter column, especially the letters that make thoughtful comments, state honest criticisms, or include additional information on one of the articles. Thanks for listening to my comments.

Christian Striker  
Bucyrus, Ohio

### LOOKING UP

It has come to my attention that there is a new science fiction/fantasy/horror publication on the horizon entitled *Fantastic Films*. All too often a magazine of this nature will materialize only to fold after a dozen or so issues (*Castle of Frankenstein* comes to mind); hopefully *Fantastic Films* will endure the test of time. This appears a definite likelihood, the Ralph Bakshi, Phil Kaufman and Richard Donner interviews were very well done.

As for their respective films, I will say this, *Lord of the Rings* is spellbinding. I sat enraptured from beginning to end. The animation is nothing short of spectacular. Leonard Rosenman's serene score sets the mood perfectly (it is almost as fitting as *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* soundtrack).

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is harrowing. Rarely has a musical composition complimented a film as well as does the score for this film. The film itself is out of this world (no pun intended). Alex Eisenstein's assessment of the original novel as compared to the two screen versions is what is needed more often. Let's have more of this in-depth comparison. Consider the drastic revisions of Richard Matheson's excellent novel *I Am Legend* (filmed as *The Omega Man* with Charlton Heston and *The Last Man On Earth* with Vincent Price). The possibilities are endless.

As for *Superman*, all I can say is that the film lacks depth. Fly he does, but little else. Believability is forsaken in favor of hollow characterizations that only add to the already numerous problems tainting this production. Chris Reeve is certainly the personification of Kal-El, but his role lacks the polish of the character given by the late George Reeves.

*Star Trek* (the movie) should turn out to be the definitive film of the genre. Another film that should set some type of precedent is the upcoming production of Conan with bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger in the title role.

William Coffin  
Richmond, Virginia



# DAN O'BANNON ON ALIEN

## ALIEN SCREENPLAY WRITER SPEAKS HIS MIND

Interview by ED SUNDEN II

**FF:** You got a new movie coming out—*Alien*.

**O'BANNON:** Right.

**FF:** And you went through all kinds of hassle and trouble with it.

**O'BANNON:** Yeah, I wrote the first half of *Alien* in 1972. I was just looking through my notes. I've kept a running journal for about the last ten years.

At the time I'd written the first half of it but I didn't have a title for it. Back then we were still working on *Dark Star*, the picture derives some elements from *Dark Star*. It was like, while we were in

***ALIEN began as a simple story called "Gremlins" about a World War II B-17 bomber crew on a mission over Tokyo who are terrorized by a horde of midget monsters.***

the midst of doing *Dark Star* I had a secondary thought on it—the same movie, but in a completely different light.

**FF:** Why didn't you direct *Alien*?

**O'BANNON:** I was going to, but my partner, Ron Shusett, wanted to go to the studios, and with the studios there was no way. Back in '76 I had hit a really bad career and economic slump. I was in a terrible situation.

**FF:** Ron Cobb was telling me you were sleeping on Shusett's couch.

**O'BANNON:** Yeah, right, that was when *Dune* fell through. And incidentally, I

Last issue copy editor, Ed Sunden II, coughed a lot of "Alien" ground with concept artist Ron Cobb. Dan's interview took place four days later, January 30, with Dan in the midst of an arbitration over his screen credit. Material from subsequent phone conversations has been added to fill in gaps and to widen the scope of the interview. The arbitration by the Writer's Guild has ended and Dan now has full screenplay credit. Though Dan is a bit embittered in light of all of the problems that came with the making of "Alien," at 33 Dan now has a solid footing in the movie industry.

Dan O'Bannon was the co-author-director responsible for design, editing, and special effects on "Dark Star." He co-starred as Sgt. Pinback. Pinback's scenes with his alien, a mean-looking, very mischievous beachball with feet are notable high points of humor in SF film.

Dan went from "Dark Star" to pre-production work on Jodorowsky's "Dune" (Frank Herbert's novel), to effects work on "Star Wars" and his most recent movie "Alien" opened over the Memorial Day weekend.





hear that Dino DeLaurentis now has picked up *Dune*, but I bet you it won't be the same picture that Jodorowsky was going to make.

So, there I was on his sofa, didn't have any prospects at all. It was a terrible situation; I couldn't stay on his sofa indefinitely so I hauled myself up out of black depression and said I was going to do something—I'm going to write a script.

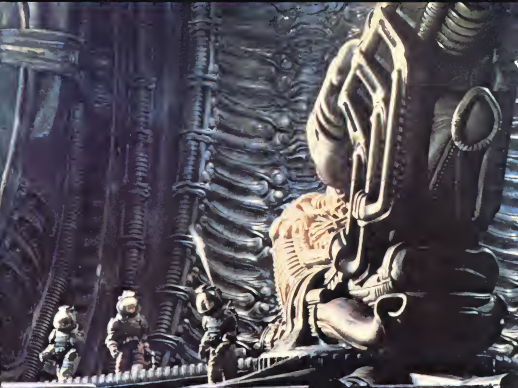
And after haggling over it a little while, Ron and I agreed to do something together. I said, "I've got a great first half of a script and I've never known what the second half of it was," and I gave it to him and he read it. And he thought about it and he said, "You had another idea for a film, and it wasn't a science fiction, it wasn't a space movie." It was an idea I had called "Gremlins," about a bomber in the second World War, a B-17 bomber bombing Tokyo on a bombing mission at night through a rain storm.

Now on the way back, it's a several hour flight back to their Pacific island base, Gremlins get into the airplane. And they have to fight these things off. He said, "Why don't you make that the second half?" Put it in the spaceship?" And I said, "Yeah, that would work."



Photos: above, the crew of the *Nostromo*, plus their mascot Jones the cat, are a definite exception to the rule that future astronauts should be freshly scrubbed stereotypes straight out of the Space Academy. Below, the landing party from the *Nostromo* discover the alien "gunner" on board the derelict.

Opposite page, three space-suited figures stand beneath the *Nostromo*, dwarfed by its gigantic landing gear.





Photos: Above, the crew of the "Nostromo." Left to right: Harry Dean Stanton, Yaphet Kotto, Ian Holm, John Hurt, Tom Skerritt, Veronica Cartwright and Sigourney Weaver. Below left, Tom Skerritt as Capt. Dallas is engulfed by his computerized control console.



That's good, that's great."

And so we talked the story out and I wrote it for a period of about three months with continual discussions and me pounding away on the typewriter. My belongings were in storage, but I carted out of storage that desk and that file cabinet and that chair, and stuck it in Ron's front room so I could work. And the traveling typewriter and I wrote it because I planned to direct it. I wanted to do it for about half a million. I was going to take it around. But when it got done, Ron wanted to go and try the studios. Well, he did, and it worked the first shot out. And that was it as far as me directing it.

**FF:** Who was it taken to, Brandywine?

**O'BANNON:** It was taken to Brandywine Productions by a fellow named Mark Haggard, Ronnie Shusett made a finder's arrangement with him. A finder's arrangement means that if he puts it in contact with somebody who finances a movie, he gets a certain agreed-upon sum. Haggard knew Walter Hill and he took it to Walter's company, Brandywine, which was Walter Hill and Gordon Carroll and David Giler.

They read it, they called us in and Gordon said to us, "We've read 300 scripts and this is the first one we've all agreed on." Okay? Great compliment. And they proceeded to make a deal with



Photos: above, the landing crew from the *Nostromo* make their way across the "bio-organic" terrain of the alien planetoid as they approach the derelict spacecraft. Inside the derelict, Dallas inspects the skeletal remains of its alien pilot.

us. And we got into a lot of haggling, there was at least a month of negotiating. Finally we made a deal, an option deal, and they took it to Fox with whom they'd just made some kind of production arrangement for their company. And Fox immediately expressed interest and Brandywine exercised the option which was a real surprise 'cause it was the first time in my life I'd ever had an option exercised. I'd sold many options but I'd always had them revert. I'd never had them fork over the cash on the barrelhead.

**FF:** Typical. Happens all the time.

**O'BANNON:** What happens?

**FF:** Options reverting. You realize that probably half of everything that Heinlein has ever written has at one time or another been optioned, and with the exception of one story, it's always reverted.

**O'BANNON:** Well, this one didn't revert. They'd payed us wham!-landslide—cash! It was interesting because it came just in time to pay my medical expenses. I'd been under such stress and other problems plus not taking care of myself, that I came down with a very bad stomach ailment in 1977. I was sick a great deal of that year, I was in and out of the hospital. Then Fox hired me, they put me on salary to go in and design the whole movie. So I hired Ron Cobb and I asked for Chris Foss who





Above, an ill-fated crewmember is about to be lowered into a subterranean chamber inside the derelict spacecraft.

was in England and they actually hired him and flew him over.

**FF:** You'd worked with Foss on the *Dune* project?

**OBANNON:** Yeah. And I tried to get Cobb on to *Dune*, but it never worked out. So I felt a debt of honor to Cobb because there Ron was with his bags packed on my word and it never happened. So I felt real upset about that, and I felt like I owed him one, and so I really warbled to make sure he was on *Alien*. But of course that was hardly the principal reason. The principal reason is because he's so good.

You know, Ron Cobb gave continual input to the film right from the very start. He gave us one of the major plot elements, the monster has an incredibly corrosive bloodstream, one of the reasons the monster can't be cut up or fired at is that its blood would eat right through the ship. That was Ron's idea and I want everyone to know it.

**FF:** I think we both agree that Ron's incredible!

**OBANNON:** And I got them both, and we spent the whole summer in some little offices there, designing it.

**FF:** You spent seven months designing before they found a director for it?

**OBANNON:** No, They had a director—Walter Hill. Hill was scheduled from the beginning to direct the picture. But finally in the summer of '77, Walter Hill withdrew from directing *Alien* to go do *The Driver*. Instead, He preferred to do *The Driver*. And that left them without a director.

**The monster has an incredibly corrosive bloodstream. It can't be cut up or fired at or its blood would eat right through the ship!**

**FF:** So they got Ridley Scott?

**OBANNON:** No, it didn't happen that quickly. Gordon had to go out and look for other directors and the very moment he started to look the Directors Guild went on strike. They were on strike for several months. All we could try to do was get some preliminaries out so when the strike was settled, maybe then Gordon could make some moves. When it was all over Fox said, "Here." They handed Brandywine a list. And Ridley was at the top of the list and they said, "Pick one." So they took the first one.

I remember getting this call from Gordon Carroll. He said, "You must meet Ridley. You're going to like him." I was real skeptical because we'd had a difficult time even to that point. I went in, and there he was, Ronnie Shusett had feverishly rushed up to him and shoved a copy of the original draft of the script into his hands because Giler and Hill had begun to rewrite it. We were disturbed by the content of the rewrite. Ridley read it and he said, "Oh yes. We have to go back to the first way, defi-

nately." So it was Giler and Hill's turn to be disturbed. As a result, the entire remainder of the production ended up being a battle between camps. One camp wanting one version of the film and another camp wanting the other version.

**FF:** And all of you inextricably involved?

**OBANNON:** Yes, inextricably involved, right. And boy, believe me, I was inextricably involved, because if there was any way that they could have pried me loose and gotten me out of their hair they would have. 'Cause I was such a thorn in their side.

I remember being faced with what I considered a moral decision. My agent, my manager, and everybody else was going over to England to start working on the film proper, and they said, "Be sure not to antagonize anybody 'cause their so important, it's your first project and it's a major studio, everybody's liable to be on you to make friends." I got over there and I found that the confusion was so great and the babble of voices was so loud that I couldn't make myself heard without being obnoxious. I couldn't make any impact and there were things that I felt so strongly about that I wanted to have heard. I wanted to win points, certain points I felt very strongly about it.

So I finally decided, "All right, I'm going to go against good advice for my career, I'm going to fight." And my reasoning was, in 40 years I'd still be able to sleep with myself. That I wouldn't look back and say, "You know, there's *Alien*



Yaphet Kotto and Veronica Cartwright stalk the alien monster in the lower maintenance hangers of the *Nostromo*.

and it stinks and if I had fought, maybe it wouldn't." And I looked forward to that in my own frame of mind. And I decided, "All right, I'll fight," even though that it's tactically the wrong thing to do.

There are inspirations for *Alien*—I had a lot of second thoughts about *Dark Star*, that was one of them. Well, another source was that I met Giger when we were working on *Dune*, and I'd looked at his picture books and when I got back to America I was still haunted by his work. It was on my mind and when we sat down to do *Alien* I ended up visualizing the thing as I was writing it, as we were thinking it out and I was writing it, I found myself visualizing it as a Giger painting. And I wrote this script. But then I was thinking of a half million dollar picture done here in LA. There would be no money to either import this guy or to pay him, so I knew I wouldn't be able to have him. So at first I thought I would have Cobb doing that monster—he's quite superb—it just didn't happen to be any of his (Cobb's) monsters that I had landed upon in my head when I was thinking about the script. Well when they started to do it the big way, the first guy I started pushing at them to do the monster was Giger. I had a heck of a time trying to get the producers to hire Giger. They really didn't want to get involved because he's not a movie professional, he was some "wing-ding," in Zurich. They wanted to find somebody who had done this before, that they could count on.

Well, when Ridley came to the pro-

**Giger constructed the monster of clay, skulls, pipes, tubing, veterinary and medical supplies and a veritable graveyard of bones.**

ject; while Ronnie was rushing up with the original draft of the script I was rushing up with copies of Giger's work. Ridley saw Giger's stuff he was snowed. He said, "This is it!" I really won some of the very major things that I planned in the beginning, some of the very broad strokes.

I had this vision right on this very sofa, of a Giger monster around which a science fiction horror movie was based and it ended up happening. In fact the design that they ended up getting, almost by coincidence, I had settled on in my own mind. One of Giger's designs that I liked and I wanted to see as the monster. Later on Ridley went through Giger's work and he found quite a different source of inspiration and he had Giger design from that. But the funny thing was, when it got done—when Giger ended up adapting it and designing it and shaping it up—it ended up being similar to the thing that I'd had in mind that I had never mentioned. I was just so happy to get Giger that anything he did was fine by me.

When I started thinking back I said, "You know, it's amazing. Damn it, it's even similar to the one I'd been thinking of." There's a head distortion on the creature and the one I wanted distorted the head toward the front. The one that Ridley picked distorted the head out toward the back, they're in the same family.

**FF:** I'm told that Giger built the monster himself.

**O'BANNON:** He sure did! He had expert help because there's some crafts involved that I don't think that Giger had done, like casting it in rubber materials. But he's quite a craftsman, actually.

It was an amazing sight. Giger fixes himself up to look like Dracula, he wears black leather, has black hair, black eyes, and pale complexion, he never takes off his coat, his black leather jacket, and he had them set him up, built him a little sculpting studio in the corner of one of the sound stages with a padlock on it where he could work.

He wanted clay, and basic sculpting materials and he also wanted bones. As many bones as they could lay their hands on. They ended up buying all this stuff, veterinary supplies, medical supplies, and the little sculpting studio turned into a boneyard. They got him a rhinoceros skull, three of the most perfect human skulls I've ever seen in my life. They were beauties, they must have borrowed them off a living person to get them that perfect, every tooth was intact, not a filling. I think they cost



Above, Harry Dean Stanton prepares a surprise for the alien as Tom Skerritt and Veronica Cartwright look on.

something like \$700 each, they were so primo.

He had snake skeletons in perfect preservation, they looked like lace. And junk too, just old smelly bones out of a slaughterhouse and he started sculpting.

The first thing Ridley did is he had contortionists come in. He wanted to see contortionists tie themselves in every possible knot and walk around and see if they could build a costume around a contortionist. He had two contortionists tie themselves together and walk around. And he had three contortionists tie themselves together and walk around. He finally concluded that it was just too awkward.

Finally he bought this big expensive picture book on some part of Africa, it was photographs of some remaining native tribe that still has a somewhat primitive lifestyle. There were all these really striking color photographs and this particular tribe has a very striking appearance. They're all very tall and very black and there were some very, very impressive photographs of these tall, then powerful-looking men with very supple, gleaming muscles. They're very graceful, sort of sensual, and at the same time powerful and very handsome, but almost ethereal, almost not human—very striking.

That image burned itself into Ridley's brain, he liked that power of unearthliness and grace and strength. He

**At first Ridley had contortionists tie themselves into every conceivable kind of knot as a possible shape for the alien monster.**

wanted Giger to see if he could do something around that kind of a shape of person.

Then they found their actor who is this seven-foot-African.

**FF:** So the monster was actually designed for one person rather than with a visual image of a particular type of human in mind?

**O'BANNON:** No, more along these pictures out of this book more of this Nubian black racial type.

The thing we liked so much was the grace of these black people. Giger then came in and Giger has a feel for grace, but a different kind of grace. Giger loved grotesquery. So Giger started building up around this graceful figure, his pipes and tubes and running, rotting sores and joints and pustules and strange shapes and building it up and came up with something most bizarre.

The plaster shop took a cast of the actor, full body cast and mounted it

standing up on its toes on a wooden base and Giger put it into his studio and he began to build up on it with clay and bones, an air conditioning duct, screws, and human skulls—the face of the thing is a real human skull. He took one of the human skulls and jammed it right on the front, riveted it in place, and then started modifying it.

It was such a beautiful human skull, you know, it had been a real person, not like one of those plastic model kits—and he takes out his hack saw and he saws the jawbone off and extends the jawbone, like six inches, puts an extension in it, and creates this distorted jawbone! Then he starts attaching other fixtures to it and building a new extension on the back of it. He's doing this to a real human skull!

When he finally got all done they took a cast of it, it was a craftsman who actually cast the rubber costume of Giger's sculpture. When they were finished casting in rubber he used his airbrush and painted the costume the same way he paints his paintings.

**FF:** Sounds hairy.

**O'BANNON:** It's terrific. I've really got my fingers crossed. I truly believe that that monster in *Alien* is absolutely unique looking. I think that it is two strides beyond any monster costume in any movie ever before. And some of them are goodies, like the *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, or *This Island Earth*, the bug with the exposed brain,

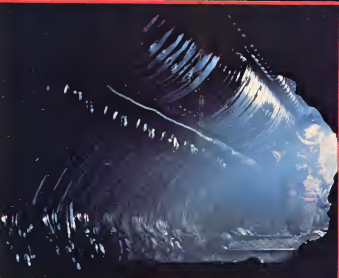


Photos top, bewildered crewmembers Tom Skerrit, Sigourney Weaver and Ian Holm discuss their circumstances after having been awakened prematurely from "hyper-sleep" by an unidentified S.O.S. Bottom, Harry Dean Stanton chases Jones the Cat through the lower decks of the *Nostromo*.





Photos, this page: top left, a space-suited crewmember of the *Nostromo* landing party waits in the lift hallway. Below, Capt. Dallas enters the strangely organic access corridor of the alien derelict spacecraft. Top center, the landing party inspects the amazing machinery surrounding the alien "gunner."



some of those were terrific. I really think this is a step beyond. I don't think anybody's seen anything like this.

**FF:** Was the original grace of the actor maintained? That image?

**O'BANNON:** Well, oh, that image, yes.

**FF:** It wasn't too clouded by Giger's...

**O'BANNON:** No, no. Definitely, Giger has a very very graceful line too. No, definitely that thing was very supple looking. Unfortunately the real grace was lost, because the suit proved to be very awkward to move in. Ridley was forced to stage around the physical awkwardness of it. The actor wasn't able to make many moves in a graceful manner. So he had to stage around it. But the visual appearance of power and grace was retained, quite different, quite striking.

**FF:** Ron said that during some of the dailies, especially during some of the bloody sequences, people who had been working on the film were dumbfounded.

**O'BANNON:** It didn't bother me (laughs).

**FF:** What I'm getting at is, from a technical interest I hear it's pretty bloody and gory and... when you see a set and all the technicians are in coveralls and the cameras are covered in plastic... there has to be something going on.

**O'BANNON:** That was great. The day that they shot that I reserved myself a box seat. I went to the set very early in the morning and I looked around where they had the cameras placed, and I





picked the best possible spot for myself where I'd be out of the way and I sat there and didn't move.

There was a pretty big audience for that shooting, a lot of the people involved in the film came and looked on that day and just basically stayed and waited. A lot of people were interested.

Fox had been giving Ridley a lot of hassle because he gotten a slow start, the first couple of weeks of shooting were slow, they were jumping all over. The reason they were slow was because they had allowed inadequate time to design and build the sets, and on the first day of shooting no single set was fully completed so Ridley had to shoot around the sets for a couple of weeks. And they still jumped all over him, they said he was too slow.

So fairly early in the shooting they got to that scene, a very bloody scene, I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't actually give the point away in the interview, you know, allude to it without letting them know what's going to happen. You know what scene we're talking about?

FF: It hasn't been described

O'BANNON: Good. Okay, I thought you knew about it. Well I'm going to stay vague 'cause I want to allude to it but I don't want anybody to know exactly what it is until they see it

FF: Sure

O'BANNON: For obvious reasons, I want the audience to get it straight in the face without any preparation. And

(Continued on Page 29)

Photos, this page: Yaghet Kotto, laser rifle in hand, searches the lower corridors of the Noobtron's engineering section for the alien. Bottom right, space-suited members of the landing party traverse the rugged terrain of the mystery planetoid which has lured them with its mysterious S.O.S.



## Still Making The Earth Stand

Interview 14



Robert Wise (left) on the set of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* with Gene Roddenberry (out of uniform), William Shatner, Ewan McGregor and DeForest Kelley.

ne of America's oldest showmen in film, Robert Wise is celebrating his 65th year in the business with *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. His seventh serious feature film, and/or fantasy film as a director, among 28 productions to his credit, *Star Trek* is a crucial picture to him for many reasons. Long one of Hollywood's top directors, Variety lists five of his films as "All Time Film Rental Champions" in their Jan. 3, 1979 issue: *The Sound of Music* (1965)—\$7,866,000; *West Side Story* (1961)—\$7,450,000; *The Hindenburg* (1975)—\$5,074,000; *The Sand Pebbles* (1967)—\$3,500,000; *The Andromeda Strain* (1977)—\$2,341,000.

But for all his success, he has also been responsible for some of the most disastrous flops of the past decade. Re-teaming with Julie Andrews on the super-musical *Star!* in 1968, the film was dismissed by audiences and critics alike as a turkey. Two People, his low key live story starring the then-unknown Lindsay Wagner and Peter Fonda, was a dud, as were *The Hindenburg* (which, though it brought in \$15 million would need more than twice that to just break even) and *Audrey Rose* (1977).

This series of flups must have been most confusing to Wise, as he had such a good track record in the previous decades. The offer of directing *Star Trek* must have been a happy surprise, for in Hollywood, a director, regardless of track record, only gets so many chances, and Wise had used up quite a few recently.

Undaunted, Whelan launched himself into *Star Trek* like the pro he has always been. Unable to start it apart and start from scratch, as has been the case on other projects where he was brought in after the initial concepts were worked out, he changed and improved what he could and made do elsewhere. As he is about to begin shooting, Contributing Editor James Deacon met with him in his Paramount Pictures offices and discussed his sci-fi career, fiction and fantasy films, ending with a look at the *Star Trek* situation.

Science fiction and fantasy crop up regularly in Wise's list of credits.



THE CURSE OF  
THE FIVE PEOPLE  
(1944)

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

**WISE** Youth Hearing Center has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop a hearing conservation program for students in the state of Texas. The program will focus on hearing conservation for students in the state of Texas.



Fire4 did for him, he wrote to attach "I the Bird" letter that the Writers Guild insured him giving him school credit with Philip MacDonald. Vol 1 and I want to improve his name or if so he took the pen name of Carl Jackson.

FF: Will you not spin that out further, most noteworthy?

**WISE.** He taught me about the different aspects of one's contribution to a firm's reputation, particularly speaking in addition to research. It isn't just in the kind of thing you do, but in the old adage, "Do as you would be done by." So you're not only a leader and officer, but you're also a

popular sketch from the classic *Curse of the Cat* (1938), which Robert Wise co-directed with Gene Kelly.

# Interview with: NICK WISE

Still with Star Trek: The Movie

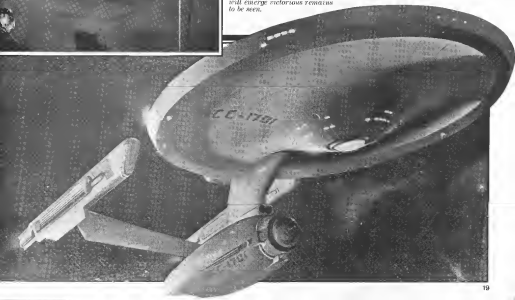
JAMES DELSON



His first film as a director, *Curse of the Cat People* (1944), was a fantasy, while the others came at regular intervals through the next three decades: *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951), *The Hunching* (1962), *The Andromeda Strain* (1971), *The Hindenberg* (1975), *Audrey Rose* (1977) and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979). Though *The Hindenberg* was not strictly SF or fantasy, it was important for two reasons: first, it was speculative science fact... what could have happened. More important, it was largely because of *The Hindenberg's* massive budget, production schedule and overall size that Wise was chosen to helm *Star Trek*. The film was a flop, but it looked and "felt" right.

Now in its eighth month of live action shooting and with another six months of effects shots before completion, *Star Trek* is taking far more time than expected to wrap. Rumors abound in Los Angeles, and most can be discounted, but it seems likely that Wise, a stickler for accuracy and cohesiveness, was just not given enough time to re-work the script he was handed and whip the film into shape before having to commence principal photography. As a result, it seems to follow that the film experienced a series of false starts, resulting in an enormous waste of time. A classic case of jumping the gun, unpreparedness which will not necessarily result in a poor film, but which has already escalated the budget from below \$20 million to its current price of \$25 million. Don't be surprised to find it costing \$30 million before it is released.

We hope to talk again with Wise once the film wraps, but until then, the following material can be looked upon as a background piece on the man responsible for the year's most important and biggest-budgeted film. Robert Wise, four-time Academy Award winner, has taken the *Enterprise* by the afterburners. Who will emerge victorious remains to be seen.





ters and costumes, the way they dressed, even the diligence the coachmen had. All those influences from Val have carried over throughout my career in terms of attention to little details.

**FF:** You have described those days as a community experience, with the writers, directors and art directors all working together, helping each other.

**WISE:** It's kind of that way now with *Star Trek*. When you're in a picture of this kind, particularly science fiction, the atmosphere calls for that sort of collaborative effort where everyone pitches in. That's the way it was with Val. Mark Robson was there directing, and Joe Mischel and DeWitt Bodeen. We all tossed ideas around, which made it a very fun, community operation.

**FF:** Before becoming a director you'd been cutting films for some time. In fact, you were cutting *Curse of the Cat People* when Lewton put you in to sub for the original director because he was taking so long to shoot the film.

**WISE:** His work was all right; he just couldn't seem to do it fast enough.

**FF:** Can you remember the experience?

**WISE:** Yeah. Well, a little bit. Fortunately, I didn't have much time to sweat out taking it over because I was told on Saturday noon that I would take over on Monday morning. I went without sleep for the whole weekend, because I was nervous, very nervous. I had only done a little directing before, on second units and when the director wasn't available. When Monday eventually came, I went up to the sound stage hours before the actors arrived. When we finally got the actors assembled I gulped, paused, then died in. There was an old-time director around in those days named Richard Wallace. He was never a Wyler or a Ford, but he was a quality man and did some good shows. I had cut *The Fallen Sparrow* and *Bombardier* for him, and we were good friends. Dick happened to be directing a film on the RKO lot, and he heard that I'd gotten my break, so that Monday morning about 11 o'clock he came to visit and wish me well. I've always tried to remember what he said, though I sometimes forget it.

"Bob," he said, "I only have one piece of advice to give you. If the scene seems a trifle slow on the set, it will be twice as slow in the projection room." He was so right. Very rarely over my years of directing, have I wished that I had played a scene slower. Usually I think, "Damn it, I should have picked it up a little bit."

**FF:** Was your experience as an editor extremely important to your success as a director?

**WISE:** It helps when you're deciding where you put the camera and in the kind of coverage you get. In my case and with a lot of other film editors who became directors, it also leads to the shooting of more film than you might otherwise need. It's commonly thought that a film editor going into directing will shoot less because he should know exactly how to cut and where he wants to go, but that's not really the case. If you've ever been an editor, you know how marvelous it is to have all the extra coverage in the bin so that you can cut to it and drop a line or something. It took a while to shake that luxury in favor of more worthwhile pursuits.

**FF:** When you began directing were you uncomfortable working with the actors?

**WISE:** Well, that's what I was most nervous about. I hadn't had any experience in ac-

ling. In fact, even when I was involved in school theatrical productions I was always backstage, the stage manager. When I started working in film, doing second unit directing, my contact with actors was minimal. The work was never very demanding, so when I started directing I was still pretty inexperienced. I had to feel my way. Fortunately, I had a very simpatico group on *Cat People*. They helped me as much as I helped them and it worked fine. When I talk with young people who are studying film today, one of the things I urge them to do is to take some acting. Study it and do it, so they'll have some one-on-one knowledge of what the actor is going through out there. It's very, very valuable training. I'm sorry I had to do it the hard way. I had to learn to work with actors as I was directing them, and that wasn't fair to them, to the films, or really to myself.

## THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951)

**FF:** In your script for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* you had a marginal note on the first page which read, "Watch direction and level of looks of people to spaceship." It must be very difficult to figure out the right place for actors to look if what they're looking at is going to be added later.

**WISE:** It's tough, but crucial. It's for the reality of the scene. Looks and angles of looks depend on how high your camera is. If somebody is looking off at something and the camera is at the wrong angle, too low for instance, the object the person's looking at is going to be too high. You always have to double-check through the camera or ask the operator, "Does that look about right?" and sometimes it's lowered or raised depending on where the camera is. One has to be very conscious of this. That goes back to editing again, because I knew that if a scene wasn't shot with proper angles, it wouldn't cut together convincingly.

**FF:** Did your experience as a second unit director help you decide what footage to shoot second unit?

**WISE:** It helped enormously. I had learned to figure out what to shoot beforehand. Like most directors, I prefer not to have any second unit, but sometimes you have to do it, as I did with *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. It was very carefully planned. We knew exactly what the second unit was going to shoot. I went to Washington with him before I started to shoot principal photography and went over everything. We had photographs and sketches of everything that I wanted to be shot, and he followed the plan we laid out.

**FF:** There was another suggestion in the script that seemed fairly sneaky, but very creative. I don't know if you actually did it or not, but you were going to shoot in a ballpark, and the marginal note you made was, "Should we make a deal with the management to make a startling announcement over the public address system to get the crowd buzzing reaction?" I suppose you wanted to get them to go "Ahhhhhh!"

**WISE:** It's not an unusual sort of approach. One does all sorts of things that are shockers to get people to give you a reaction. I wouldn't take it as far as telling a little kid that his little dog just got run over to get a tear out of him, but something like the ballpark stunt is legitimate. You can



Setting up one of the final scenes from *Wise's Day The Earth Stood Still*. Note that Gor's visor is up and Lock Martin is looking out.



Setting up to shoot the melting down of the weapons in the beginning of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.



The house begins to take its toll (above) on one of its occupants in *The Haunting*. A scene outside the eerie house (below) of *The Haunting*, considered by many to be the scariest picture ever made.





Wondering why the child did not die in *The Andromeda Strain*.



The cast of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* in their new uniforms and sporting their improved utility belts.

only do it once, of course. It's a one-shot bit, but if it works it can make a scene. **FF:** In order to build concern and fear from the very start of the picture, and lend honesty to the sequences where the spaceship was coming down, did you talk to your extras and give them specific instructions?

**WISE:** Yes, to a degree I can't go one-on-one to an extra, because if I, as a director, single out an extra and give him a specific instruction or direction, I've made a bit person out of him. It'll cost me \$100 instead of \$50, I can only do it en masse. An assistant director must be the one to tell an extra what to do, I can only do it en masse.

**FF:** Do you generally set the scene for the assembled extras?

**WISE:** Oh, yes, that I can do. I talk to them constantly. For instance, if they're going to have to look up at something, I tell them what the scene's about. I say that there's going to be a man holding a long pole with a red flag tied onto the end of it. They should look right at it when I give the cue, because it's going to be the spaceship coming in or going across. You've gotta fill them in as completely as possible, make them as much a part of it as you possibly can. You need everything you can do to hit their interest and their excitement because it tends to be a very humdrum job. **FF:** For Klatu's first contact with Earth people, when he's trying to show them he's just a person, your marginal note reads, "This can play very easy. He should play this very easy concern as to how he is carrying it off. As I see it, this would be the only place in the story where he steps out of the role as space man." Was that something you wanted to spring on Michael Rennie on the day you shot the scene rather than put it into the screenplay so he could think about it beforehand?

**WISE:** That sounds right. It was probably just a thought for the set, just a reminder to me to tell Mike. When one writes these things down, you're not thinking of being in an archive twenty years later.

**FF:** Most of your projects have been adapted from other media. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was based on an adaptation of

Harry Bates' *Astounding* magazine story, "Farwell to the Master." Under your deal with Fox was it brought to you, assigned, or just suggested?

**WISE:** When I left RKO I signed a non-exclusive three or four year pact with 20th-Fox. Every picture I made over there was given to me. Some of the ones given to me

**"Science fiction is a very freewheeling kind of milieu. You can get away with more because nobody really knows what we'll find in the future."**

I didn't make, but this had been developed and the first draft screenplay was already finished when I was asked if I would be interested. I said, "Let me have it. Let's go."

**FF:** The early 1950's saw the beginning of a science fiction boom, with *Destination Moon*, *This Island Earth*, *Forbidden Planet*, and a bunch of others. Did you feel pressured to do something different from the other SF films being made at the time?

**WISE:** I don't think so. We thought we had a very good, interesting and completely fascinating film in itself. I'm sure we looked at *Destination Moon* and whatever else was around at the time. You usually see what's been made recently in that general vein just so you don't duplicate anything. But there was not any undue pressure to do anything except what we tried to do, make the best film we could out of that script.

**FF:** Let's touch on the spiritual and religious aspects of science fiction films, some of which are seen in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. *Star Wars* had The Force, making it pretty accessible, and *CEK* had a surrogate religious feeling, at least from the SF enthusiast's aspect. People going to *Close Encounters* were saying, "Finally, we're going to meet THEM and there's not going to be any shooting and there's not going to be any

apprehension about it except what they're going to give us, how we're going to communicate, and what they're going to be like." This all ties to something you once said: "The science fiction type of film probably offers more opportunities for messages, for themes, for comments, for warnings about our society now or where it's going, than any other type of film."

**WISE:** Well, science fiction is a very free-wheeling kind of milieu. You can get away with more because nobody really knows, nobody is really sure—there's only a lot of projection and thoughts of what's there, what we'll find in the future. Therefore, you're relatively loose and free to improvise. By using it in certain ways you can reflect and comment on man's place in society, on society and the Earth and on Earth's place in the Universe.

**FF:** The musical score for any Robert Wise film is something to look forward to, because great care is taken with it.

**WISE:** You bet.

**FF:** Historically, Bernard Herrmann's score for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is an important one. It had a lot of effect on other SF films. Were you trying for any kind of special effect with the theramin music in it?

**WISE:** We were looking for something a little different than we had seen and heard in the other SF films of the day. I believe Bernie was the first to use a theramin. This gave his music an other-worldly quality. It was familiar, but unfamiliar at the same time.

**FF:** How did you approach doing Gort, the robot?

**WISE:** The whole process of creating the robot was a challenge to us. We couldn't build an actual robot suit. The closest we could come was having a giant man inside a foam rubber robot suit. He was a fellow about seven feet tall who was a doorman for many years at the Gräuman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood.

**FF:** Did the development of the robot create many problems?

**WISE:** Two or three problems. One of them was simply figuring a way to get him in and out of the suit, so we put a zipper in it. We had to make two suits though, so we could shoot both the front and back. So we had the zipper up the back when he's



Robert Wise in a recent photograph.

coming towards the camera and we're shooting the front of him and that's all fine and he goes by the camera. Now I have to do a reverse and shoot the back of him, so I had to take him out of the suit, which was a half hour deal, get him a breath of air, and then put him in the suit with the zipper up the front, so I could photograph him that way.

**FF:** Did you try to get the knees to work better?

**WISE:** Well, as we watched the film being cut together we could all see that the foam kind of buckled in back of the knees as he would walk away from the camera. It was a problem, but we had to have the shots where this happened. When we took the film out to sneak previews it was one of the things we were watching most closely to see if the audience would be conscious of it and laugh at it. Thank goodness they didn't. If they saw it, they didn't find it funny and we got by without any bad reactions to it.

**FF:** There was nothing you could do?

**WISE:** It was something we just couldn't lick. I cut around it as much as I could in the film, but there were a few shots where we had to be in back of him, and couldn't avoid the knees. It turned out that we didn't have to worry, but we were really sweating it out at the previews.

## THE HAUNTING (1963)

**FF:** You began your career as a sound effects cutter. As a result, the sound element has played an important part in your films. This is particularly true in *The Haunting*, which relied heavily on its sound effects to draw the audience into the story.

**WISE:** I decided to use a playback system on *The Haunting*, the same type of system a director would use on a musical during the song or dance numbers. We had all these things that the actors had to react to, outside the door and what not. I knew I didn't want a prop man banging on something. The sound effects really had to work because they were so basic to what the actors' reactions would be.

**FF:** Were all the effects worked out in advance, story-board style?

**WISE:** Well, we worked up a number of sound effects, not the final ones we had in

the picture, but very close to them. Every time we had to do a sequence that required a specific sound effect, I was able to have the actors react to something close to what you heard on the screen.

**FF:** What sort of effects did you develop?

**WISE:** Well, if you recall *The Haunting*, there were no door creaks or hollow echo-

**The sound effects in 'The Haunting' had to work because they were so basic to what the actors' reactions would be. I knew I didn't want a prop man banging on something.**

ing footsteps. We had something outside. The ghosts, the real inhabitants of Hill House, were outside the door, so we had to create something. We made all the sounds. We made them specifically. We hired a special sound effects man, and he made the ones we used on playback during shooting. He came back afterwards and used some of those and added others. Some of the sounds were taken out of sound effects libraries, but he created the noises that chilled you.

**FF:** I had bad dreams when I first saw *The Haunting*.

**WISE:** I've had some people tell me that it's the scariest movie they've ever seen.

**FF:** Have you ever been terribly scared by a film?

**WISE:** It happened to me after I saw *The Cat and the Canary* when I was about ten years old. I was living in a little town in the mid-west and I used to sleep with my older brother. The night I saw it, I remember running all the way home from the movie house. It was about 9:00, and I was so scared. I got in bed and just shivered under the covers for about two hours 'til my brother came home. *The Cat and the Canary*—I've never forgotten. Scared the bejesus out of me.

**FF:** When you're making a chiller is that what you're trying to do to the audience—scare the hell out of them?

Poster and book art from Wise's psychic thriller, *Audrey Rose*.

**WISE:** Sure. That's the purpose of it, to scare the people on the screen and at the same time scare the audience, it's two-fold.

**FF:** What effects created for the film were you most pleased with?

**WISE:** Well, I remember the shot where the girls are in bed. It's the first time they hear it, and the sound is kind of like a sniffing outside the door—all around the door. The feeling's like, "If there's a little crack, I can get in." I loved that. It was hand-made for the film.

**FF:** When you're designing a film about a house being evil as opposed to a flesh-and-blood character or a moving object like an automobile, what do you look for and how do you use it?

**WISE:** We wanted a house that basically had an evil look about it. Since the firm was going to be shot in England, we looked far and wide to find the right house. There are a lot of manor houses and old places in England, but one after the other did not fit our requirements. Finally, we found one about ten miles down from Stratford-on-Avon. It was an old manor house, about two hundred years old, and it was being used as a country hotel.

**FF:** What distinguished it?

**WISE:** It had a facing of mottled stone with gothic windows and turrets.

**FF:** How did you accentuate the feeling of evil?

**WISE:** Well, we were shooting in black and white, so when we shot in the daytime we used infra-red film. There's something about that film stock that makes the skies black and highlights the clouds. It really made the texture of the house exterior kind of awful, which worked enormously well.

**FF:** The film was based on a novel called *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson. Since the house itself was evil, did you consider using the original title?

**WISE:** We didn't like that title. When I say "we," that particularly means me and Nelson Gidding, who did the screenplay. It seemed cumbersome and the book had not done that well. Jackson is a marvelous writer, but her books were never tremendous sellers, they got most of their ac-





**Behind-the-Scenes, The Making of**

# **DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE**

Article by AL TAYLOR



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Nineteen Sixty Nine was a turning point for Hammer Films. They had left Bray and were preparing to shoot their third Dracula film. The Hammer team, each with his own special input, share with us how the film was put together.

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## SYNOPSIS

In the hells of a small village church a boy makes a chilling discovery. The village priest (IEWAN HOPPER) hears his cry and hums up. Inside is the body of a young girl with two fang marks deep in her neck.

Time passes. Along the mountain road comes the Monsignor (RUPERT DAVIES). In the church the priest is saying mass. By him stands the now aged youth, showing signs of idiocy. There is no one else in the church. At the local inn townsfolk explain to the Monsignor they never go to church anymore because the shadow of evil hangs over everything—a shadow cast by Dracula's castle, high on the hill. The Monsignor orders the priest to accompany him to the castle the next morning, to prove the castle is empty. At most at the summit, the terrified priest agrees to wait while the Monsignor performs a service of exorcism outside the gates of Dracula's castle. Thunder and lightning crash across the skies. The priest runs with fright and topples down an incline to the edge of a stream. There, buried beneath the ice, is Count Dracula (CHRISTOPHER LEE). The priest stirs, blood from his cuts trickles down into the lips of the vampire. The priest staggers to his feet and washes away the blood. As the waters become still, he sees the dreaded vampire reflected behind him. In a moment the priest is hypnotized. Outside his castle, the vampire sees a nailed cross, forbidding him entrance and demands to know who did it. His new slave answers that it was the Monsignor.

Back in the village, the Monsignor prepares to leave. The grateful townspeople present him with a carved cross for rid ding them of the vampire. Only the landlord (GEORGE A. COOPER) fears otherwise. At home, in Keinenburg, the Monsignor rejoins his brother's wife Anna (MARION MATHIE) and her daughter Maria (VERONICA CARLSON), who is to have a birthday party. Coming, too, is Paul (BARRY ANDREWS), Maria's boyfriend.

In the local cafe packed with students, the atmosphere is gay. Waitress Zena (BARBARA EWING) dispenses beer and sausages. Paul enters, is

joined by Maria and they go to her home. Paul shocks the party guests by admitting he is an atheist. After a row he leaves. Zena, wending her way home in the pitch-black night, finds herself face to face with Dracula, who attacks her. Next morning Paul, hurrying to the bakery where he works, discovers Zena huddled in a corner, a strange expression on her face. Later in the cate, Zena is joined by the owner, Max (MICHAEL RIPTER).

That night in Keinenburg, the priest slips from his room and makes his way into the cafe's cellar. In a far corner Dracula is rising from his coffin. He demands that the priest bring Zena. When she arrives, the vampire asks her to get Maria there on some pretext. Upstairs, Zena tells Paul that when Maria arrives, she will bring her to him in his study. Maria arrives looking for Paul and Zena says he is waiting in the cellar. They descend to gether. Zena slips a sack over Maria's head and drags her to Dracula. Paul bursts in and Maria struggles away and rushes to Paul; they escape.

Dracula is furious and kills Zena; he tells the priest to get rid of the body. Paul and Maria go back to her home and he leaves. Watching from behind a tall chimney is the priest. The next day Paul asks the priest to take a note to Maria. The priest burns it and hums to tell Dracula the girl is alone in her bedroom. That evening Anna goes to her daughter's room and finds Maria slumped across the bed, but does not notice the two fang marks on her throat. The Monsignor, however, does. The next evening Dracula rises again, dashes across the rooftops and slides into Maria's room, where she waits. Waiting too, is the Monsignor, hiding in the shadows. At the sight of his crucifix, Dracula runs off.

The Monsignor, felled by the priest, instructs Paul in how to fight the vampire. Paul sees the priest in the streets and brings him to Maria's home. At the sight of the priest the Monsignor cries out and dies. That afternoon, the priest, fighting to escape from the vampire's powers, succeeds with the aid of the crucifix. He explains to Paul what has happened. To gether they set out after Dracula.



Veronica Carlson as Maria is confronted by Christopher Lee's strictly image of Dracula.

In November of 1968 Anthony Hinds (pen name John Elder) completed the script of *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave*. During the making of the film at Pinewood Studios after they had moved from Bray Studios, Hammer Films was given The Queen's Export Award to industry for their spectacular success in bringing back from the United States millions of dollars in the export drive.

*Dracula Has Risen From The Grave* was released in 1969 and has been cited as one of the better Dracula efforts. Terence Fisher was to direct, but a broken leg caused Fisher to be replaced by Freddie Francis. The thematic grace and consistency of Fisher's work in the series was now lost, although we were offered some fine moments.

The publicity campaign by Warner Brothers in the U.S. was totally a tongue-in-cheek approach. For instance, the slogan "You just can't keep a good man down, *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave*." Another bit had a photo of a girl's neck with two band-aids captioned over Dracula's fangs. "Who can brush after every meal." A third plug used a photo of the young girl found hanging up-side-down in the church bell captioned as "Ring Out The News that *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave*."

The film was entertaining and interesting mainly as it pointed toward the overly sexual path that the Hammer vampire film was now on. Thus it was retitled *Dracula et les Femmes* in France.

It was three years before a sequel came from Hammer Films. Count Dracula's body was frozen in the ice below the castle after the drowning he received in the climax to *Dracula—The Prince of Darkness* (1966). He is revived by the blood of a cowardly priest who has gone to the castle to aid in exorcising Dracula's evil. Once Count Dracula is revived the screenplay turns into a revenge treatment, although



At the birthday dinner before the horror arc, from left, Veronica Carlson, Barry Andrews, Rupert Davies and Barbara Ewing.

the sense of revenge is obscured. Dracula enlists the priest as his servant and proceeds to go after the Monsignor and his loved ones. The finale has Dracula chased back to his castle where he meets his end as he falls and is impaled on a cross.

The cast and crew had pros and cons about the making of *Dracula Has Risen*. Christopher Lee (Count Dracula) recalls, "The third *Dracula* film, which I have not dared look at as I am convinced it is a very indifferent film, is making fantastic sums of money on the London circuit. In its first day on general release in the Southern area of London it grossed over \$25 thousand." The truth of the matter was that *Dracula Has Risen* was the most financially successful motion picture Hammer made to that date.

Christopher Lee, however, couldn't tolerate what had been done to the Count. Lee said, "The story is just adequate, but the production values and direction are good and I even manage to say something occasionally, I still look more or less the same as I did in *Dracula* (U.S. title *Horror of Dracula*—1958), but of course I can't help about any more like I used to and several scenes were done by my double, Eddie Powell, who has been with me for several years."

Veronica Carlson, who played Maria, had different thoughts about making the film. Veronica now is married, has a little girl and when not acting, is a professional artist. Veronica remembers the director of *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave*, "Freddie Francis, very kind, gentle, a lovable man, infinitely patient—he needed to be with me. He made the impossible scenes seem possible. Freddie made you feel you didn't need to do the scene one more time to get it right."

"When I had left the set and returned to my dressing room, I found a lovely gift of flowers sent to me from Freddie, wishing me the best for a successful picture. That

started things off on the right foot with me, I can tell you. I had ruffled feathers a few times and Freddie always helped."

"I think the scene I found most difficult to do was the love scene with Barry Andrews (Paul). I was embarrassed by Hammer's standards this love scene was mild,

**"I think the scene I found most difficult to do was the love scene. Just undoing the back of my dress in 'Dracula' was enough to undo me."**

things have changed so much I don't think I could have worked for Hammer later on, because I never wanted to take my clothes off. Just undoing the back of my dress in *Dracula* was enough to undo me. Freddie made me laugh about it, he acted the scene with me before Barry Andrews did it. Freddie helped reduce the over-all feeling on the set to one big happy family."

"The other scene that I particularly enjoyed in *Dracula Has Risen* was my confrontation with Chris Lee as Dracula in the cellar. In that scene I was thrown flat on my face, if I remember rightly. Really thrown, I remember the pain at the time, a very genuine feeling of discomfort. I fell hard on my knees and as I threw my head back I was confronted with the real-life

*Dracula*. It took my breath away! I must have been Hammer's biggest film fan in college, yes I skipped classes to go and see Hammer's horror films. I got along with Chris Lee very well and between takes I did a sketch of him as Dracula."

"The finale of Chris impaled on the cross was very difficult. Frank George did the special effects using Chris strapped with a cross on front and back of him, a dummy was also used for the disintegration. That scene of Chris impaled on the cross looked outlandish on the studio floor. It seemed out of context, somehow! I think one of the most difficult things to do when you're making a 'fantasy' film like this is that you're supposed to be so serious, you have to convince your audience that you're finding it serious to make. But you get laughter from cast and crew and this is where Freddie Francis came into his own again, to bring you down to Earth, to wipe away the smiles and make you believe in it again. I remember how Chris Lee's eyes would weep with those red contact lenses, but he never complained once."

Miss Barbara Ewing (Zena) was born and raised in New Zealand; earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at Wellington University. "It's funny," she notes, "I got my B.A. in literature, so I studied tales of vampirism throughout the world. And now I've become one!" Miss Ewing had starred in one other motion picture prior to *Dracula*, which was *Torture Garden* for Amicus Productions.

Rupert Davies, an excellent character actor, played the Monsignor in *Dracula Has Risen*. Davies enjoyed his work for Hammer Films, he had a strong acting foundation for character parts. A few years ago the BBC, looking for an actor to portray Maigret in Georges Simenon's stories of the French detective, signed Davies for the part. The series ran for years in almost every country in the world,

# DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE

Count Dracula.....	CHRISTOPHER LEE
Monsignor.....	RUPERT DAVIES
Anna.....	VERONICA CARLSON
Zena.....	BARBARA EWING
Paul.....	BARRY ANDREWS
Priest.....	EWAN HOPPER
Max.....	MICHAEL RIFFER
Landlord.....	GEORGE A. COOPER
Anna.....	MARION MATHIE
Girl hanging in bell.....	CARRIE BAKER

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer: Aida Young; Director: Freddie Francis; Assistant Director: Dennis Robertson; Screenplay: John Elder; Director of Photography: Arthur Grant, B.S.C.; Art Director: Bernard Robinson; Editor: Spencer Reeve; Special Effects: Frank George; Composer: James Bernard; Matte Artist: Peter Melrose.



Barry Andrews as Paul prepares to drive the stake through the vampire's heart as priest Ewan Hopper looks on.

and Davies became a big star. Davies was born in Liverpool and returning to civilian life after the war, went into repertory. He then joined the Old Vic for a number of years during which he toured North and South America. In the following years, he became one of Britain's best character actors, appearing in numerous films and teleplays. This background and his love of the theater and character parts is what he attributes his strong character portrayal of the Monsignor in *Dracula Has Risen*.

The producer for *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave* was, Mrs. Aida Young, one of Britain's two female producers. It was her second film. She became associated with Hammer Films in 1963 as an associate producer on *What A Crazy World*, and then had the same job on Hammer's remake of *She*. Mrs. Young assisted Michael Carreras on *One Million Years B.C.* and then became an associate producer on the Rank epic, *The Long Duel* with stars like Yul Brynner. After producing *The Vengeance of She* for Hammer, Mrs. Young started on the third *Dracula* film.

Her task was to make sure the Hammer film was on schedule and within budget. She did not hide her overcast and crew with a near strangulation budget of \$400-\$500 thousand, with a promotion figure of no less than \$50 thousand. Mrs. Young is a

very keen producer and she makes sure all is well, reporting to the front office and the Hammer executives what, why, when and where the over-all production of the film was at all times.

Freddie Francis had done one monster/horror film for Hammer prior to taking the directorial duties on *Dracula Has Risen*. That movie was *The Evil of Frankenstein* in 1964. Francis recalled, "Well this is my second horror film—and quite honestly, I don't like doing them. I do think they have been done to death and for this reason I do not think one has to play about with the *Dracula* legend, then in no time at all, and I think this has already happened, each is going to be a remake of a remake. I think one has to get away from this legend. After all, Hammer has already created new legends."

Freddie Francis was a brilliant cinematographer and had won an Oscar for his photography on *Sons and Lovers*. His ability with the camera, telling a story, keeping within budget and schedule was why Hammer wanted his talents.

Bernard Robinson, as usual, did a beautiful job on the set design. The sets had an early 20s German film influence, shades of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, with the surrealistic roof tops and houses that *Dracula* roamed about freely.

The castles created by matte paintings were created by a very talented gentle-

man, Peter Melrose. Melrose recalls his work on *Dracula Has Risen*.

"At the time I painted the mattes for *Dracula*, I was ironclad again, but in the happy position of being able to take the work into the Special Effects at Shepperton Studios and hire the facilities, this worked well for both of us. The budget and time schedule was extremely tight, maintained by the eagle-eyed surveillance of Mrs. Aida Young. Under the circumstances I found her criticisms less than helpful. She kept describing the castles I painted as Gibbs castles—a Gibbs castle being the well-known trade mark of the toothpaste manufacturer!"

"Notwithstanding this, the shots were rushed through without problems, the most difficult shot being the one where a set of the castle was shot with a 98mm lens making all the lines of the architecture curved and difficult to follow through into the painting. The matte castle paintings were all done on glass, as the most rigid material you can use. When photographing the painting what we did in order to get the matte or mask was to light the painting in silhouette against a light background and with that we actually get a mask to put in our optical printer."

"For materials for my matte paintings I always use artists' oil colors," said Melrose. "This is the only medium which, in my opinion, has the depth of color that is required for any kind of scene. When it comes to research and reference material, which is very important, I had to do my homework. The production designer, Bernard Robinson, was a very talented designer for many of the Hammer Films, so to match the high quality of his sets I needed to put in the same kind of research. He loaned me his reference materials so I could get the architecture of my matte paintings as correct as his sets, that nice Gothic style."

"Some of the matte paintings for *Dracula* were extremely difficult because the paintings in a number of them practically filled the screen. Several shots of the castle, there's hardly any real building in the shot, it's nearly all painting. There was also one or two full-frame paintings where the frame is filled with a complete painting not a matte shot at all."

Anthony Hinds (John Elder) script has several interesting points as he builds so deliberately on religious ironies, beginning with the priest (*Dracula's* henchman) and continuing with the atheist hero. The finale of the script bears looking at for the sheer horror which unfolds as *Dracula* is impaled on the cross, a rather anti-Christ theme.

Some critics claim that Hammer's advertising is more carefully prepared than the scripts it plugs. "There are more nudes in our posters than in our picture," Carreras readily admits. This thinking was prior to the 70s, but Carreras also insists that Hammer promoted "pure entertainment"—and not "sado-sexuality or occultism." Carreras himself inspects the rushes each week to make sure there is no explicit sex or violence. What most critics do not realize is that the horror film, by its very nature, must touch upon the primal fears we all harbor in the depths of our own subconscious. Perhaps the most terrifying of all would be our individual erotic longings.



## DAN O'BANNON ON ALIEN

(Continued from Page 17)

the producers also want to keep it quiet but for what I think is a somewhat pettier reason. They don't want it stolen for TV. I just want the audience to get it fresh. I don't want it getting out in advance. But I was there watching that thing and at a time when Fox was putting enormous pressure on him for being too slow, he took an entire day to film one short sequence. I was there and they had three cameras set up 'cause they wanted to catch it from all angles and all of the cameras were covered with clear plastic tarps. The lenses were covered with flat optical glass like underwater cameras and Ridley and the D.P. and all the main technicians were all wearing coveralls up to their necks. It took them three to four hours to get the actor who was going to do the stunt rigged because there was mechanical stuff involved. Meanwhile the other actors didn't come on the set, I don't know where they were, they had a room where the actors could hang out and talk to each other. Then they brought them in when they were ready for it, they hadn't seen all the preparation. All they did was they walked on, they saw all these tarps, and they saw these huge hydraulic machines with hoses leading to this rigged man, and they saw everybody wearing coveralls. I looked at Si-

gourney Weaver, whose the lead, I saw her face as she looked at the tarp, coveralls and camera, and she seemed to go a little bit shakey. The actors looked real uneasy when they saw that set-up because it looked like they were trying to prepare for Vesuvius.

I don't even know if they're going to leave it in the picture. I understand they're getting a little bit chicken-hearted in the cut.

But the amount of blood was just unparalleled. I saw Veronica Cartwright get drenched from head to toe in blood and scream her fool head off and fall backwards over a table and brain herself.

**FF:** What were they using?

**O'BANNON:** I don't know, artificial blood, not real blood. Then afterwards these two people pick Veronica Cartwright up and she was weak-kneed and they had to help her off the set. She was drenched, all her clothes sticking to her, and her hair sticking to her with this red dye and she was near hysterics.

And 20 minutes later they came back and they had showered her and fixed her up and put a duplicate costume on her and she looked the same, but a little spooked, and I went up to her and I said, "That was really terrific. Was that all acting?" And she looked at me and she said kind of spooked, she said, "Well, I

was a little freaked-out." I just saw her in *Body Snatchers*, they just released it, I hadn't been able to see it even though she did it before she did *Alien*. She was one of the best people in *Body Snatchers*.

**FF:** Have you seen a final cut of the film?

**O'BANNON:** No, not yet.

**FF:** Do you think, from everything that you've seen of the production work and the dailies to this point, that it's your film? Is it the way you wanted it?

**O'BANNON:** No.

**FF:** What was significantly changed, what was changed to your dismay?

**O'BANNON:** Everything.

**FF:** Can you start with a couple of little things? Can you point them out?

**O'BANNON:** They dropped a major plot element out of the script.

**FF:** Can you elaborate?

**O'BANNON:** In the movie, the Earthmen discover a wrecked, derelict spacecraft. Actually no, that's not correct. In the movie, the men discover a wrecked construction of non-human manufacture and inside of it they find eggs which end up being the eggs of the monster. In the original script the men find a crashed derelict spacecraft and they enter it, they discover that the alien crew are all dead. They return to their own ship to contemplate what may have killed the alien crew and then they dis-

cover a pyramid on the planet which appears to be indigenous and is primitive. They enter the pyramid and there they find the eggs. They combined these two elements. They squeezed them together into one sort of uneasy entity.

**FF:** The idea behind that, I would assume, being that the dangerous aliens were coming back to spawn or something?

**O'BANNON:** No, they were two different races. In my script, it was a space-going race that landed on this planet and had been wiped out by whatever was there. And now the Earthmen come and they endanger themselves in the

in the camerawork, while they're not what I planned, are great. They're just different. Also, it's not 100% Ridley either. It's Ridley superimposing his vision over the cumulative vision of others, you see. Now this could be such a strong director's picture because Ridley's directorial and visual hand is so strong. There will probably be a tendency among critics to refer to it as Ridley Scott's vision of the future. And he did have a vision of the future. But it was his distillation of the contributions of everybody else that came before, that's what his vision is.

**FF:** Basically, Cobb and Foss and Giger and you...

didn't shoot Hill and Giler's rewrite, Ridley shot my script.

So I took it to the Writers Guild for arbitration. On a Friday I got a call from the WGA telling me that they've decided in my favor. Then in the next breath they tell me Hill had immediately submitted an appeal of that decision. Finally after months and months of hassle the WGA has decided and the writing credit will read: *A Screenplay by Dan O'Bannon from a story by Dan O'Bannon and Ron Shuseff.* I've been vindicated. I still don't know about my design credit but we'll see.

The problem with the money-men is that a lot of them don't care about mak-



Photo: at left, Dan O'Bannon, screenplay writer, poses at the entrance to "C" stage at Shepperton Studios (note the "Alien Graffiti"). At right, Ron Cobb, concept artist, (left) and H.R. Giger, surrealist preproduction artist, take a break for lunch at a Shepperton pub. (Photo by Robin Love)

same way. In the new version it's just sort of a surrealist mystery.

**FF:** And whatever they find there in the alien construct is actually the menace?

**O'BANNON:** Yes. So they combined, and they did some things... and there were some changes made that were better. There were some improvements made.

**FF:** In what direction?

**O'BANNON:** I think they made some of the characters cuter than they were. Some of the dialogue is definitely snappier than it was in the original draft. I think that a lot of the designs that Ridley supervised differ because his visual hand is very strong over the surface of the picture. I think many things like that changed. You asked if it was my film. And I said no. And you said in what way and I said every way. And you said, can you name one of the things that disturbs you, well not every way in which it is different disturbs me.

**FF:** A lot of them are okay?

**O'BANNON:** Ridley has this lavish, sensual, visual style, and I think that Ridley is one of the 'good guys.' I really think that he is—was the final pivot point responsible for the picture coming out good. And so a lot of the visual design and a lot of the mood elements inherent

**O'BANNON:** And Ronnie Shuseff. And if it sounds like I'm knocking Ridley, I'm not.

**FF:** No-no, it sounds very complimentary. What's the next project?

**O'BANNON:** I'm writing a novel, called "They Bite."

**FF:** What's it about?

**O'BANNON:** Well, it's *Alien* only a lot better, considerably different. It's another monster story with a different setting and a different monster and a different plot, and it's better. And I've been sitting on it 'cause I'd been wanting to take a break and not work on a film for a while. I wanted to write a book, and I thought, "Well, hell, if I'm going to write a book why not use that, it's the best material I have right now." So I'm gonna write a book. Another scary monster book.

**FF:** Why not another film?

**O'BANNON:** I may write another script, to direct myself, but I'm never going to get into the hassle I got into with *Alien*. It's amazing. Back in September of last year I started negotiating and hassling for my screen credit. Giler and Hill wanted the credits to read, *Screenplay by Walter Hill and David Giler based on a screenplay by Dan O'Bannon from a story by O'Bannon and Shuseff.* They

ing good films, and don't understand movies, yet they insist that you do it *their way*. The very people who say, "I don't understand anything about it, and I don't like it," they rewrite, they change everything you do, they don't let you do it yourself. That's what's so infuriating. They go, "You know, six months ago I couldn't spell *autuer*, and now I am one." I've got an insight for you, this is something that I've finally learned which has disappointed me very, very greatly.

I'm finally realizing this: movies are fun to watch; movies are not fun to make. They're fun to think about, they're fun to plan in your mind... the best part is when you make it up in your head. And you see that movie... to me that's the best part. That's stimulating.

Then you try to make it and the trolls come at you. And the trolls have all the money.

"Ooo-shahah-coog! Me eat your guts, me want marrow, ummm, me producer, me want to suck out marrow, throw away artist, good, ummm, throw away, give me another artist, me hungry. Suck marrow out of another artist."

**FF:** Well, I just hope that the released version of the movie pleases you.

**O'BANNON:** Me too.

# ALIEN ARTWORK



by **R. COBB**

**A Collection of Preproduction  
Concept Paintings from the  
Science Fiction Thriller ALIEN**



Photos this page: top, the search party from the "Nostromo" leaves the ship in search of the alien S.O.S. as a sandstorm rages around them. Bottom left, the "Shark" (now renamed the "Nostromo") descends. Bottom center, a crewmember enters the "lamb," a scene which has since been dropped from the storyline.





Photos this page: top, the "Nostramo" landing party reaches the alien derelict craft, source of the mysterious distress signal, in this early conceptual painting. Bottom right, a crew member enters the interior of the derelict alien spacecraft and discovers the skeletal remains of an other-worldly astronaut.

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# SCIENCE FICTION



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# ON TELEVISION

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Fifth of Seven Parts: Survey by JAMES DELSON

**T**HE FIRST FOUR ARTICLES IN THIS SERIES EXAMINED THE BIRTH, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION science fiction, from 1949-1966. During this period TV SF had evolved through a number of phases, starting with serialized adventures of a strictly juvenile bent. This was followed by a cycle of crude explorations of the medium's possibilities, then a long string of outer space operas, succeeded by an even longer series of simplistic, gimmick-related comedies. As the sixties were drawing to a close, TV SF went through another phase. Discarding the limited direction and repetitiveness of previous cycles, the period from 1967-72 was the first sign of general growth in the genre since it began. The new shows were not easily identifiable for the most part, and broke new ground in their hybrid approach to adventure mixed with comedy and more sophisticated anthology programming.

Unfortunately, television audiences were not up to the challenge of innovation, however presented, and the shows met with an overwhelming case of audience apathy. *Star Trek* was not the only series to meet its doom in this span. Of the 20 programs covered in installments V and VI, three quarters did not survive their first two seasons. Because of this high fatality ratio, TV SF was not looked on as a "healthy" area in which to experiment. Nowhere is this more evident than in reviewing the absence of new production in the 1969-72 period, when only five new network SF programs debuted, an all-time low in a genre that had traditionally presented two or three times that number in an average four-year period. Though a new boom would follow, building to an all-time high in response to the opening of *Star Wars*, TV SF would not offer such a varied collection of interesting and different programs for a decade. This transition period offered very few memorable shows, largely because the ones with the most promise were cancelled before they had a chance to develop properly. But four programs, at least, offered the audience a glimpse of originality that would be fully explored late in the seventies: *Captain Nice* (January 10, 1967/ABC); *The 21st Century* (January 20, 1967/CBS); *The Champions* (July 11, 1967/NBC); *The Second Hundred Years* (September 6, 1967/ABC); *The Flying Nun* (September 7, 1967/ABC); *The Prisoner* (June 1, 1968/CBS).

TV SF CHRONOLOGY: 1967-68: *Captain Nice* (January 9, 1967/NBC); *Mr. Terrific* (January 9, 1967/CBS); *The Invaders* (January 10, 1967/ABC); *The 21st Century* (January 20, 1967/CBS); *The Champions* (July 11, 1967/NBC); *The Second Hundred Years* (September 6, 1967/ABC); *The Flying Nun* (September 7, 1967/ABC); *The Prisoner* (June 1, 1968/CBS).

## PART V: 1967-72 CONFUSION REIGNS

### CAPTAIN NICE (January 9, 1967-September 4, 1967/NBC)

"Look! It's the man who flies around like an eagle!  
Look! It's the enemy of all that's illegal!  
Who can he be, this man with arms built like hammers?  
It's just some nut who flies around in pajamas  
That's no nut boy  
That's Captain Nice!"

The song was the worst part of the show. Created by Buck Henry after *That Was The Week That Was* and *Get Smart* and before *The Graduate*, *Day of the Dolphin*, *Quark* and *Heaven Can Wait*, this short-lived series was, to date, TV's funniest spoof of super heroes.

William Daniels, a fine actor best remembered for his portrayals of John Adams in 1776, Benjamin's father in *The Graduate* and the gun-toting suburbanite in *The President's Analyst*, played Carter Nash, a police chemist relegated to a basement laboratory. Quite by accident, Nash discovers Super Juice, a potion that empowers its imbiber with temporary super powers.

Deciding to use his discovery for good, but fearing for his job, Nash solves crimes and saves the day without giving away his identity. Even his parents, Alice Ghostly and the generally-obscured by the morning newspaper Byron Foulger, don't know his secret. His mother would be interested but his father wouldn't understand. It seems that he always wanted a dog, so when a son arrived instead, he decided to call him Spot. This running gag of non-communication between father and son was a strange prelude to the Daniels-Hoffman relationship in *The Graduate*.

Nash's girlfriend, police sergeant Gandy Kane, was played by Ann Prentiss. Paula's younger sister. She was always trying to seduce Nash, a nice twist on the Lois Lane/Superman situation. She never understood how crimes were solved, but was grateful that someone was on the job. Police Chief Segal (William Zuckert) and Mayor Finny (Liam Dunn) were excellent foils for Daniels and Ghostly, who generally had the ideal dilemmas in which to mix the Batman, *Green Hornet* and Superman approach to superheroism. Dunn, especially, was forever flustered by the appearance of this odd guy who didn't want anything for his services.

*Captain Nice* was more sophisticated than anything else on television at the time except *He and She* and *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*. Both of these were cancelled prematurely as well. After a brief run in the winter and spring of 1967 *Captain Nice* halted production and was re-run until the fall. A comparable SF parody didn't emerge until *Quark*.

### MR. TERRIFIC (January 9, 1967-August 28, 1967/CBS)

Coincidence is one thing, but this sort of synchronicity must have resulted from espionage. Basically the same notion as *Captain Nice*, *Mr. Terrific* offered the adventures of Stanley

Boemish, a meek gas station attendant who was instantly transformed into a superhero by a pill. Where *Nice*'s dose had varying time limits, *Terrific*'s lasted just one hour, where *Nice* had a police job but acted independently, *Terrific* was a civilian sought out by and working for the U.S. Government, both were meek and mild mannered, both flew, though *Nice* did it without flapping his arms, both showed a marked aptitude for making mistakes but emerging victorious. If the theory of parallel worlds were ever to be proven, the sponsors would be well-advised to study the disastrous attempts by different networks to do identical shows on the same night of the week in following time periods.

Cleveland Amory, reviewing the series in *TV Guide* said, "The individual shortcomings of the script, the acting and the directing were matched only by the innate tastelessness of the whole idea." The only pluses in the series were the performances of Dick Gautier as *Terrific*'s pal, Hal, and John McGiver as Barton J. Reed, subchief of The Bureau of Special Projects, the agency which controlled M.T. Gautier had been featured as Hymie the robot in *Get Smart*, and would go on to play Robin Hood in Mel Brook's short-lived *When Things Were Rotten*.

Perhaps we are being unfair to the creators of *Mr. Terrific*. It's just that the long-standing reputation of Buck Henry weighs heavily in his favor. Stephen Strimpell, the actor playing Mr. Terrific, denied that the two shows were similar. "Nice is mother-dominated. Hates girls. A passionless man, brilliantly written. But that's the stuff of satire, not situation comedy. *Terrific* is the true romanticist. He plays-acts. As *Terrific* he's Flynn, Cagney, Wayne, Belmondo, Batman. But when the chips are down, he would rather bird-walk than fight evil any day." A convincing argument?

Whether one show alone might have lasted is hard to say. With *Terrific* on CBS Monday nights a half-hour before *Nice* on NBC, the audience, if there was one, was split. The unfortunate likelihood is that, given the choice between two shows, viewers would have chosen the more palatable *Terrific*. Whatever happened to Stephen Strimpell?

### THE INVADERS (January 10, 1967-September 17, 1966/ABC)

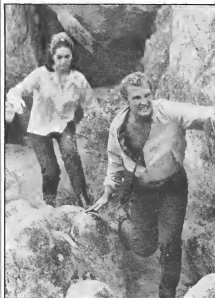
Quinn Martin, producer of television's ultimate escapist dramas, including *The Untouchables* and *The Fugitive* failed to make *The Invaders* a hit in a season and a half. Not that he didn't try. He gave us a standard television hero, David Vincent (played by Roy Thinnes), an easily identifiable evil (aliens bent on taking over the world) and a workable premise (Vincent is the only man on Earth who knows what's in store for us). Why did the show fail?

Martin was a very commercial television producer. But his mistake with *The Invaders* was in using too broad a setting for us. The hero was fine, but the enemy was too widespread. They turned up all over the place. Since no one believed him, except the eventually convinced Edgar Scoville (Kent Smith),

and the Invaders kept multiplying, the audience must have realized that it was just a matter of time before the aliens really would take over the world. Why watch our destruction from within by outsiders when the college students were doing such a good job over the Vietnam War in 1967-68?

It seemed impossible for Vincent to gather evidence for his case against the aliens. If he shot them, they would disintegrate. If he captured them, they would figure a way out, if he found someone to help him, they would be eliminated. Not exactly *Close Encounters*. In fact, star Thinnex went around the country making personal appearances in which he built up audience attentiveness by suggesting the evil possibilities of U.F.O.'s. If they ever come, he'd better have his change of identity ready.

When the series started slipping in the ratings, new



Suzanne Pleshette is a guest on *The Invaders*, playing with series star Roy Thinnex.

characters: believers in the alien rumor, provided him with financial backing and a host of ancillary assistance. All for nothing. They never solved the problem. And if that was twelve years ago, perhaps the aliens had time to grow their cones properly. They could be teaching driving instruction to unwitting converts at this very moment.

#### THE 21st CENTURY (January 20, 1967-September 28, 1969)

Hosted and narrated by Walter Cronkite, *The 21st Century* was a documentary series featuring the technological breakthroughs expected in the next century. Areas covered included home computers, two-way communications devices via computer, advances in transportation, talking computers (shades of H.A.L. 9000), art in the 21st Century, a journey through the bod via an endoscope (influence on *Fantastic Voyage*?), a two-part show on the perils of pollution and a show on space travel.

Well-produced and interesting for the whole family, the series came too soon, perhaps. News and documentaries did not enjoy a renaissance until the early seventies.

#### THE CHAMPIONS (Summer 1956/NBC)

Different sources list different debuts and airdates, which suggests that the show was syndicated and picked up for distribution by NBC.

Running only ten episodes in the United States, *The Champions* was one of the British series regularly picked up by networks as experiments to test the water for possible regular season/prime time viewing. *The Avengers* is an example of a series that clicked, where *My Partner the Ghost* did not.

The series followed the adventures of Craig Stirling (played by Stuart Damon), Sharon Macready (Alexandra Bastedo) and Richard Barrett (William Gaunt) as they telepathically foiled evildoers from attempts at international espionage and wanton destruction. Their boss, W.L. Tremayne (Anthony Nicholls) commanded the operations through "Nemesis," a top-secret organization operating out of Geneva, Switzerland.

The explanation of the agents' super powers shows the influence of James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*: escaping with a deadly bacteria sample stolen from the "Red" Chinese in Tibet, the three agents/heroes borrow a plane to get away. But they are shot down before they can make it over the Himalayas and crash land in the mountainous wasteland. Rescued by an old man who nurses them back to life, the agents find they are in a sort of Shangri-La environment. Here, the world has been forgotten and etc. They are imbued with super powers that will later be borrowed for such series as *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*. Their mental and physical capabilities are enhanced to an unheard-of level of perfection, as are their senses of hearing, sight and mental capacity. Telepathy is just one of their powers, but it plays a major role in the series.

During the course of the series, the heroes save the world from war, confront modern-day witches, survive cryogenic destruction and do their best to protect and defend both the world and Mother England (even though the series is set in Geneva). As the program didn't find as big an audience as necessary to sustain a regular run, only ten of its 30 episodes were aired in the U.S.

#### THE SECOND HUNDRED YEARS (September 6, 1967-September 19, 1968/ABC)

While prospecting for gold in Alaska in 1900 Luke Garpenfer is buried and perfectly preserved by an avalanche. He is discovered in 1967, revived, and brought back to Woodland Oaks, California. There he meets his sixty-seven year old son and has a grand reunion. Problem is, Luke, though physically 100 years old, is really only 33, having been cryogenically preserved. Returning home with his son, Luke meets his grandson, who, at 33, is his exact double.

Starring Monte Markham as Luke I and II and Arthur O'Connell as the son, the series relied on creative anachronism for laughs. It ran only one season.

#### THE FLYING NUN (September 7, 1967-September 11, 1969/ABC)

"The only problem with this series," Sally Field said recently on *The Tonight Show*, "was that the man who used to 'fly' me was an alcoholic. He used to drop me into fountains, bump me into walls and land me on fire hydrants. Sometimes I wondered if it was all worth it." Now she's a movie star. It was worth it.

Although it was only on the air for two seasons, *The Flying Nun* struck a deep chord in the American consciousness. It still plays in daily reruns on many stations, and Field, despite her well-publicized affair with Burt Reynolds and a couple of semi-nude roles, has found it hard to shake her virginal image.

The series began with a simple notion: Elsie Ethrington (Field) influenced by the activities of her aunt, a dedicated missionary, gives up her worldly life and becomes a novice in a Puerto Rican convent. For the next two years she is nutty, zany, cute and generally helpful to the populace. All this despite her unfortunate tendency of being lifted off the ground by updrafts of wind, hence the show's title. The gimmick was clever, and pre-dated hang-gliding by several years for the general public. After some practice, Elsie (renamed Sister Bertrille) became quite proficient at steering her way around the island, a religious *Sky King*.

Whether the aerodynamics of flight were realistic is doubtful, but being able to fly yet still being human was a workable gimmick. Lacking wings, rudder and landing gear, all Bertrille needed was her wide nun's hat, her corset. The age of fantastic realism had caught up with super heroes and heroines.

*The Flying Nun* had a large supporting cast, including

Madeline Sherwood as the Reverend Mother Plaseato, head of the convent, Marge Redmond as Sister Jacqueline, Linda Dangoul as Sister Ana, Shelley Morrison as Sister Sixto (a latter day Ricky Ricardo because of her splintered English), Alejandro Rey as Carlos Ramirez, a rich Puerto Rican playboy who helps the nuns through troubled times, Vito Scotti as Captain Fomento, the village policeman, Naomi Stevens as Sister Teresa, and Elinor Donahue (via *Father Knows Best*, *The Andy Griffith Show* and pre-*Old Couple*) as Bernille's real life sister Jennifer Ethington

The show was not very preachy, and managed to work in adequate numbers of bikini-clad women and high-fashion dressers at the Casino Carlos, run by Ramirez. The plots generally revolved around Sister Bernille's knack for getting into mischief, a combination of *My Little Margie*, *I Love Lucy*, *The Monkees* and the aforementioned *Sky King* all rolled into one. But with the aid of the other nuns and her aerobically abilities, all turned out for the best.

One might assume that the Catholic Church would consider Bernille's shenanigans to be sacrilegious, but the opposite proved true. The National Catholic Office for Radio and Television thought of it as a first rate recruiting tool showing



Sally Field as the woman you will believe can fly in the popular, if insane, series *The Flying Nun*.

runs in an enlightened stance more suitable to the permissive 60s. What did they have to fear? Unlike *The Mod Squad* or *Marcus Welby, M.D.* which dealt with topics such as pre-marital sex, drug abuse, abortions, free speech, free love and birth control, *The Flying Nun* restricted its plotlines to decisions about such controversial issues as feeding orphans and holding charity benefits—same city, two years away from the start of ground-breaking comedy that would challenge the mind when *All in the Family* debuted.

In a poll taken during November of 1967, *The Flying Nun* was found to be the most popular program in America for children between the ages of 6 and 11. For teenagers from 12 to 17 it was sixth in popularity, and for those older, richer or better educated, it didn't appear in the top programs at all. Considering these facts, it is no wonder that Sally Field was once quoted as saying "I didn't want to play a nun. You're not allowed to kiss or show your belly button. Everyone's got to start somewhere, but very few get to live out their ambitions."

#### THE PRISONER (June 1, 1968-September 21, 1968/CBS)

Produced in England by Patrick McGeehan's production company for I.T.C., the series was picked up in a limited syndication deal with CBS, rerun the following year, then rerun again without commercials in the 1978-79 season by the Public Broadcasting System.

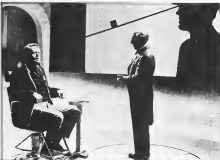
Though unbilled as such, *The Prisoner* could be looked upon as the first television mini-series. A complete story with a beginning, a middle and end, it featured continuing characters, a distinct philosophy and more than the average amount of intelligence behind its conception. Along with *The Twilight Zone*, *Star Trek*, *The Outer Limits* and a handful of other shows, it is considered an example of what television SF could be if it were only given the chance.

Patrick McGeehan, a television favorite since his *Secret Agent* days, starred as a nameless character, something

attributed directly to his earlier series theme song "Secret Agent Man... they've given you a number and taken 'way your name." Billed simply as Number Six, the character faced the Kafka-esque problem of establishing an identity in a hostile environment, while at the same time trying to escape his seemingly ordained fate to rot there for the rest of his life. Confronted by a different "Number Two" each week, Number Six fought to survive his oppressors and simply fade away.

Talking of the earlier series, McGeehan said, "They (the television executives responsible for the show) wanted me to carry a gun and have an affair with a different girl in each episode." He avoided that, though the series suffered from a severe case of low budget, every show having been shot in the confines of Pinewood Studio, regardless of their supposed location (Caribbean, Switzerland, etc.).

As executive producer, sometime director and fulltime star on *The Prisoner*, McGeehan controlled the project, keeping it within his vision throughout the seventeen-episode run (the last one was not shown on CBS, but was picked up for syndication). It tells the tale of a secret agent who finds his un-named government reluctant about his plan to retire from the service. His head is too full of secrets, gleaned in his service to the Crown. He is kidnapped and sent to an idyllic



Patrick McGeehan is interrogated once again in the amazingly durable, cult status series *The Prisoner*.

village, where he finds himself interned in a never-never-land existence surrounded by defectors, spies, retired scientists and other personages whose grey matter is also too dangerous to let them roam freely about the streets of the regular world.

"I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, debriefed or numbered! I am not a number! I am a person!" The character claims all this, but we never hear him say his actual name in the course of seventeen hours. Modesty or manipulation? Surrounded by the stylized places of interest that make up the Village such as its restaurant, cafe, hospital, command center, houses, Palace of Fun, graveyard and town square, everything around the Prisoner shows just how indexed he is. The picture-book world he is forced to inhabit screams out its order and discipline. Should one try to escape, a huge opaque balloon will bring you back, or your own past will force you to return. Very heady stuff for the family hour.

McGeehan's reasons for doing the show have never been thoroughly examined, but one quote gives some insight into his feelings about *The Prisoner*. "What do you do with defectors, or with people who have top-secret knowledge of the highest order and who, for one reason or another, want out? Do you shoot them? I know there are places where these people are kept. Not voluntarily and in absolute luxury. There are three in this country. Let someone deny it? I know about them because I know someone who used to be associated with the service. I just hope there are a couple of thoughts in it somewhere that relate to the things that are going on around us, to our situation at the moment." Spoken more than a decade ago, his words still carry weight, and the series continues to make one think. A pity McGeehan hasn't done more work, for judging by this outing, he might have made substantial contributions to the medium. His double-speak vision of dirty tricks, invasion of privacy and single-minded obedience to a tyrannical leader whose flunkies bear the brunt of his guilt could be called a precursor to *All the President's Men*.

# ROBERT WISE

(Continued from Page 23)

claim from the critics. We always felt that maybe there was a better title somewhere, and actually, she gave it to us. We had some questions about the story and her intent. Since she lived back in Vermont where her husband was a professor at Bennington, we made arrangements to fly back one weekend and meet with her. We wanted to talk about some things in her story, to get some clarifications on what her intentions were. We had lunch with her

ter stuff, but that was one of its problems. It was a different kind of language to me but I still worked closely with the guys in planning how things would be done, just as I contributed on accomplishing the various things that were done on *The Day The Earth Stood Still*. I always want to have very close ties with my co-workers, though I probably understood a little bit more of what was going on in terms of the effects in those days that I did with some of the stuff that Doug was going to generate. But I worked with him as closely as I could. Of course, his plant was someplace

of them said, "Fine, absolutely fine. It would not violate us at all. There are many, many top women scientists in the country and more every year. I think it would be great." Only then did we go ahead and do it. And of course we were fortunate enough to get Kate Reid to play it. She was just marvelous.

**FF:** Your films have often had a documentary feeling. *The Andromeda Strain* had a good deal of it, making it almost a documentary detective film.

**WISE:** This goes back to an earlier thing you said about showing the money on the

## "When I talked to Douglas Trumbull I was impressed by his vision, the way he saw things. I took him on face value as to what he could accomplish."

that day and during the course of it we asked her if she'd ever had any other title for it, and she said, "Well, I really hadn't. The only title I really ever seriously considered was *The Haunting of Hill House*. But the other one I had thought of for awhile was just *The Haunting*. It was in front of us all the time, but we never saw it. She's the one who gave us that."

### THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN (1971)

**FF:** The *Andromeda Strain* is one of the few films where the actors who play scientists are believable and the equipment they use is real as opposed to movie mock-up.

**WISE:** I'm delighted that came out, because it was real. We had something between two and three million dollars worth of equipment at that studio at one time, borrowed from various concerns who were interested in helping us do it because they wanted their products shown. They liked the whole idea of our showing modern technology, but it was difficult because we had to have a lot of technicians around to help us keep the machinery running. In terms of casting, I didn't go for any major names because I felt it would be more realistic and more believable if we had people who were fine actors but not of star stature. It may have been wrong in terms of box office, but I felt the story demanded every bit of believability and credibility that I could possibly add. Having a big name like Greg Kinnear or Kirk Douglas would have taken something away from the effectiveness of the picture.

**FF:** The *Andromeda Strain* used its budget exceptionally well. It cost six and a half million dollars, and it looks like every cent was spent on the effects and overall look of the film. A particularly good move was the hiring of Douglas Trumbull to work on special camera effects.

**WISE:** I knew he'd been on *Space Odyssey*. When I talked to him I was impressed by his vision of what we could do, the way he saw things. I took him on face value as to what he could do and what he could accomplish.

**FF:** This was the first time you'd worked with such sophisticated effects, the differences between '51 and '71 must have been enormous.

**WISE:** Well, I suppose so. I had a lot of special effects in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, but here we were starting to get into the computer bit. *Andromeda Strain* was one of the first pictures to use the compu-

ter stuff, so we needed a liaison. I had an intern from the AFI. I always like to give interns a special area of responsibility as well as the opportunity of learning as much as they can about the whole film. The man had been at USC and had been a photographer, so I assigned him to be the liaison, letting Doug know when we needed film and so on.

**FF:** Were there things you would like to have done in *Andromeda Strain* that you couldn't because of cost, time or other impracticalities?

**WISE:** I don't really think so. We didn't stint on anything and I don't ever say to Doug, "I don't think we can afford it." We were fishing for a lot of things that had been described in the script, but we didn't quite know how to photograph them.

**FF:** Can you be specific?

**WISE:** Well, I think one of them was finding the green spot. Then we had to figure how it would be magnified. He went through quite a number of attempts at making all those graphics, like the electron microscope and how it broke up. I don't know if he would say this, I'm sure it wasn't completely that way, but he used a trial-and-error method to find out what would look best, what would be right, before he finally got it.

**FF:** Like so many of your films, this was based on a novel. You've said you were immediately caught up in the look it gave of our computer culture. It was one of the first true 70's films because it abandoned the 60's and established the clean look which is now a standard in all science fiction films. In addition, you changed one of the characters from a man to a woman. Were either of these difficult decisions?

**WISE:** Well, I was very cautious about changing one of the book's four main characters, who were all men, into a woman. When the screenwriter, Nelson Gidding, said he wanted to do it, I said, "Get out of my office. I can see it now. I can see the critics, you know, Raelle Welch in the submarine. I won't have it." He said, "Wait a minute, hear me out." He started describing this woman in her 40's and all her qualities, and I thought, "Yeah, that is kind of interesting." But I wanted to be sure that we wouldn't violate the scientific community.

There were a couple of scientists to whom we'd given the book, and I called each one of them, and asked, "What would you feel if this character was a woman instead of a man?" I described pretty much the woman that we had in mind and both

screen. I felt very strongly that it was a real story on a very vital subject, that I wanted to tell it as realistically as I could. Since this particular story dealt with a hush-hush underground facility that was a marvel of sophisticated technology, I really felt we'd be much better off not having any big name stars running those electron microscopes. The actuality of it would be more of a reality achievement if we had fine actors who were not that well known. So I convinced Universal not to put our money into high priced stars. It went into the production, and I think we benefitted all the way around. So that's how we had the money for the fine look of the film and the reality, in a sense, of the actors.

**FF:** You took great care in shooting with lab animals. Was there a question about actually killing them on screen?

**WISE:** That was one of the big problems we faced in planning the film. It was terribly important to show the deaths of a monkey and a rat to make the audience realize how Goddamned deadly and potent this organism was, but I didn't know how in the world we were going to do it without actually killing them, which I didn't want to do. One of the first things I said to the prop man when he came on the picture and took the animals under his responsibility was, "Look, we got a problem. Read that script and tell me how you're gonna put that monkey away." He said, "Oh, we'll do something." We got the animal trainer and threw around all kinds of crazy ideas.

**FF:** Did anyone suggest drugs?

**WISE:** Yeah, and then wake the animals up and reverse the film? We got a crew together and made some tests one day, but it was just laughable. I had a young second assistant on the film named Jim Fargo. He's now a director (*Every Which Way But Loose*), but at the time he was just starting off. He said, "You know, I've got some friends out in the veterinary department at USC. I think I'll take this problem down to them and see if they have any thoughts." So he took a script down and let them read it. They fooled around a little bit, got their heads together and came up with the following idea, which is the way we shot the sequence. We took the glass area where all the animal cages were and filled the bottom of it with CO<sub>2</sub>, carbon dioxide. We set a lit candle on top of a box, about two and a half feet in the air. With the cameras ready, we waited for the CO<sub>2</sub> to rise to the level of the candle and put it out. With Jim Fargo standing by in a gas mask, we simply lowered the monkey down and opened

(Continued on Page 58)

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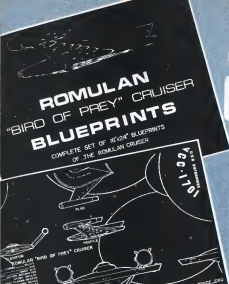
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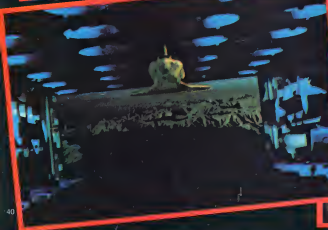
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# BUCK R

## The Inst

### An Exclusive Inter

## DANIEL

**FF:** You began your career as an art director, working on Roger Corman's films.

**HALLER:** I did about 20 or 30 or 40—kind of lost count with Roger—films as an art director and production designer, both here and in England.

**FF:** The Edgar Allan Poe films?

**HALLER:** All the Poe films and some of the teenage films. They were kind of fun. In a way we kind of handled *Buck Rogers* that way. Working with Paul

Photos, this page: top, two 25th Century patrol ships fly in orbit above the Earth. Middle, Earthships escort Buck's unbiquated rocket back into the atmosphere. Bottom left, Buck pilots his ship through the entrance to the landing hanger. Center below, an Earthship skims over a portion of desolate desert terrain.



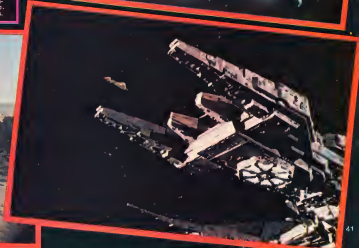


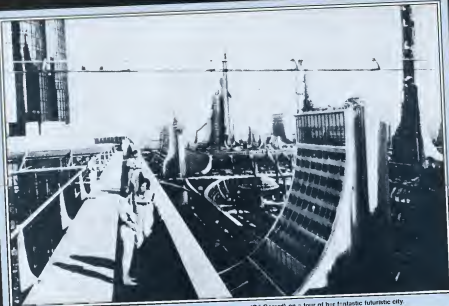
# ROGERS

de Story  
view with Director  
HALLER

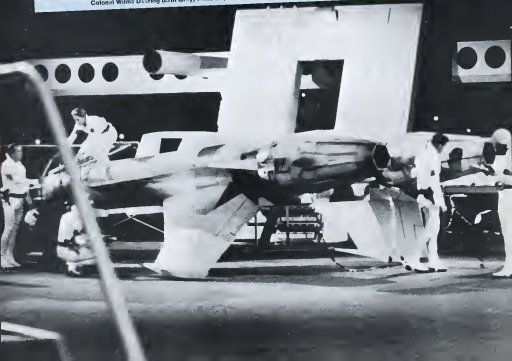
Peters, our very talented art director, we had the preparation time to do some things that you can't normally do on television. He did some great work in making *Buck* look like a feature film. Coupled with our new way of hanging miniatures, and using mattes, front projection and things that aren't generally used to sweeten out a TV project, our transition to theatrical release was a lot easier. I had to go back to my art directing days to get at the feel of a science

Photos, this page: top, a speeding Earthship zooms over barren ravines as it approaches a spiraled city in the distance. Middle, two Earthships accelerate into the inky void of outer space. Bottom right, like a giant mechanical insect, the Draconis, flagship of the evil empire, sucks Buck's ship into its ominous metal jaws.





Colonel Wilmo Daring (Erin Gray) takes Captain Buck Rogers (Gé Gerand) on a tour of her fantastic futuristic city.





Bottom left, Wilma Deering steps down from her interceptor at the underground airfield.

Above, Buck and Twiki stand amidst the rubble and debris which once was Chicago.

fiction film, but the results are quite pleasing.

**FF:** When did you start directing?

**HALLER:** I was in England under contract to AIP. I directed my first film in 1967. It starred Boris Karloff, and was called *House at the End of the World*. It was released in England under that name, but in the U.S. AIP retitled it *Die Monster, Die!* Nick Adams co-starred, and it was one of the last films he made.

**FF:** It was also called *Master of Terror*. Wally Veevers, who worked on *Superman*, did special effects, and it was based on H.P. Lovecraft's story, *The Colour Out of Space*. Did you choose it as a first film?

**HALLER:** Well, they had offered me other projects, but I was holding out for something that I wanted to do. Since it was based on a Lovecraft story it interested me. It's a flawed film, but it was fun to do. I was lucky that it was successful, box office-wise. After directing a series of action/adventure films for Roger in the interim between '67 and '70, I returned to the horror genre with *The Dunwich Horror* in late '70.

**FF:** You speak of Lovecraft as if you were acquainted with his work. Have you always been interested in science fiction?

**HALLER:** I guess I picked up quite a bit, having gone through that cycle at AIP.



Buck searches old gravestones in search of any clue to his lost past.

They owned the rights to H.P. Lovecraft at the time, and I think they've done two or three of them. A very difficult writer to interpret for film, though I think I'd like to tackle another one sometime. I think I could do it much better. Some of Lovecraft's ideas were the forerunners of things they're doing now. Fantasy films are getting more into people's heads instead of just strictly remaining visual things of a horror nature.

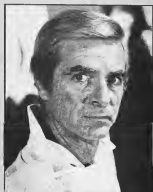
**FF:** Have you read much science fiction?

**HALLER:** Not so much lately, though Dick Mathieson, who wrote *Omega Man* and is well-known in the science fiction community is a good friend of mine. I read all his stories. But I've primarily been reading scripts lately and that's kept me involved. It's kind of a fun thing. I like interpreting science fiction. On *Buck Rogers* we tried not to make fun of it, but we still tried to have fun with it. Instead of being technically correct on how things will be in 500 years, we tried to use our imaginations.

**FF:** Were you involved in *Buck Rogers* from the very beginning?

**HALLER:** No. I was brought on by Glen Larson. We had several start dates, but were repeatedly delayed because of casting problems. I was on it about eight weeks before we started shooting.

**FF:** Had you worked on any of Glen Lar-



## The Good Guys

Left, Twiki (Felix Silla) is not only Buck's robot servant but also his best friend. Center, Buck (Gil Gerard) looks quite distinguished in his 25th Century attire. Right, Dr. Huor (Tim O'Connell) is the scientific genius who examines Buck. Below left, Colonel Wilma Deering (Erin Gray) is head of defense for the Federal Directorate, the one remaining city left on Earth.



son's other series?

**HALLER:** I did *Black Beauty* last year, a five hour film that was done on location in Kentucky. Then I did a *Hardy Boys* episode. Out of that Glen wanted me to do the pilot of *Sword of Justice*. I later did a two-hour *Sword of Justice* that hasn't been released. I think they're going to release it as a feature in Europe, and as a special here.

**FF:** You also directed a two-part *Battlestar Galactica*.

**HALLER:** Yes, I did that with Pat McNee who is best known as Steed of *The Avengers*. That was fun because we got to do Heaven as a set. You don't get to do heaven very often. We tried to do it so it wasn't fleecy clouds and angels.

**FF:** It's always difficult for a director in television, because of time pressures and other things, but once you came onto Buck were you involved in re-writes?

**HALLER:** No, I wasn't, but we worked out some things on the set.

**FF:** What kind of things?

**HALLER:** We worked out a lot of action and a little bit of the dialogue. The script was pretty close before I came on, so we spent most of our time trying to put Gil Gerard's personality into the Buck Rogers persona. Getting the character working and Gil comfortable in it was our primary concern.

**FF:** When you were shooting, was it better considered a 35 or 16-mill film?

**HALLER:** When you do a project like this, there's always the possibility that it might become a foreign feature. Some TV films are sold that way. NBC became enthused after seeing our dailies, and



## & the Bad Guys

Top left, Kine (Henry Silva) is the evil advisor to the beautiful and dangerous Princess Ardala. Center, King Draco (Joseph Wiseman) is the deceitful cosmic potentate who wants to conquer the Earth. Right, Tigerman (Duke Butler) is Ardala's towering mongol bodyguard. Below, Princess Ardala (Pamela Hensley) reveals everything except her plans to destroy the Earth.

that's when we started thinking we'd release it in the U.S. as a feature length film.

**FF:** When did you finally hear about it going theatrical?

**HALLER:** It was some weeks after the principal shooting. I was on another show when they said that it was going to be a domestic feature and that we would be doing additional photography.

**FF:** What was your reaction?

**HALLER:** I hadn't seen a complete cut at that time, so I wasn't sure.

**FF:** Are additional effects being shot, as well as the live footage?

**HALLER:** It's not so much additional footage as additional time in which to shoot it. The photography we're doing now would have been done during our principal photography, except that they took the extra time to perfect the miniatures and miniature plates involved. Now we're doing the process and matte work, and expanding it to feature film quality. We didn't have to wait this long to shoot it, but the wait allowed the effects team at Heartland to work out the kinks.

**FF:** When it came to shooting additional footage for the movie, were you called into talk about what you thought would be necessary?

**HALLER:** Glen and I and the editor, John Dumas, discussed the editing. I had shot it with a feature in mind, so we really went back and re-edited it. Instead of going into closeups like we normally would on television we tried to stay on a master.

**FF:** Had they already cut the original



negative at this point?

**HALLER:** No. The original negative wasn't cut until all the opticals and miniatures were in.

**FF:** What has been reshot or added?

**HALLER:** We had a sequence in *Anarchia* which used to be in Chicago in Buck Roger's time. In the television version, Buck encounters a group of mutants and there's a chase sequence. That was about it. Now we have expanded the sequence by getting Buck into hand-to-hand combat with the mutants. They get closer to him than they could in television. There won't be any blood; it's just that we felt the sequence could stand a little excitement and scope.

**FF:** What else are you doing or redoing?

**HALLER:** We have edited out a lot of dialogue. And by reshooting some scenes we made them play better. The scene in the graveyard is new material. The one in the ballroom was more or less edited material. We also have a couple of bridging scenes that you don't need in television. People's minds work differently when they watch television. They don't mind going from one scene to another without a bridge. They've come to expect it, just like they don't see anything wrong with going from an extreme long shot right into a closeup. So we tried to do a few scenes that would bring us to a bridge or bring us to that medium shot.

**FF:** You're also doing a couple of fight sequences?

**HALLER:** Yeah, we have a sequence with a character called Tiger Men. He's the bodyguard of Princess Ardala, the "heavy." After seeing the television version edited together we felt it needed more action. There's nothing wrong with the fight. It's not dirty. In fact, it's rather in a comic vein. But we felt that we needed something more at that place and we wanted to see more of the character, so we filmed another sequence with him.

**FF:** What do you think of the other science fiction that's been coming out?

**HALLER:** I think there's a big market for it, but it's really a movie market. Though we also do the TV series *Galactica* here, and I've directed one double-episode, I really think you get frustrated doing them as television. You want to do them as a film. That's why it was so difficult conceptualizing Buck for TV when we started out. I think unconsciously I did it as a feature movie.

**FF:** When you approach science fiction, which films do you like most, therefore feel you might be influenced by?

**HALLER:** I think it's unconscious but one can't avoid the influence of 2001. It's hard to nail it down. A lot of times I think visually, in terms of a set designer's work instead of a film director's. A theatrical stage set works well with science fiction. Take for example Gordon Craig. He was a set designer in the '20s, but a lot of his sets for Shakespeare had the scale of what we work to get in science fiction today. Small

against large, and big open spaces. Those are the things that kind of inspire me.

A good deal of the impact of our miniature effects is also based on scale. Ships that are really miniatures are accepted when they're placed in the arena of space. When the mind must either deal with the size of space or the size of a ship in space, it's easier to accept the ship. Buck carries this out continuously with an immense amount of special effects.

**FF:** Who is handling your special effects on *Buck*?



Buck is on the lookout for Draconian patrols after escaping from the bedchambers of the beautiful but evil Princess Ardala.

**HALLER:** Heartland, our "in-house" SPFX shop which John Dykstra set up for us before he moved up north, has been working on *Buck* for over a year. During that time a lot of their equipment was in the building stage. They had to tool up for the project, so it's been from the floor up. They had to equip everything, hire everyone. They were gearing up for *Galactica* too because they knew that they would take over the responsibility for that property. But *Buck* is our biggest rush right now. Some effects need five or ten passes to complete one shot.

**FF:** The film was originally going to be shown in September, 1978.

**HALLER:** Yes it was.

**FF:** Airing at with "Scene missing" titles where the effects should have been would've made it a little slow.

**HALLER:** "Concept missing" would be more like it at that time. But by then they knew that the date had more or less

been aborted, so they really didn't push.

**FF:** How do you direct an actor to react to special effects that have not been shot?

**HALLER:** Well, except for cutaways, you try to explain. Originally we were going to shoot Buck with the actors in front of a blue screen and later put in the picture that was going to be behind them. But what we're doing now is really process. This enables the actors to at least look at their surroundings. Then they can react to the plate on the projector. The blue screen was an idea that they thought might facilitate things, because we didn't know how long we'd have some actors. But I like the way it's come out.

**FF:** Both the upcoming SF disaster movie *Meteor* and your version of *Buck Rogers* have multipane special effects. In *Meteor* it's the asteroid belt, in *Buck* you travel through stars, not in front of a backdrop. Fantasy prevails. What made you choose this approach?

**HALLER:** Realistically speaking, when you're out in space it's like driving along the highway at night with your camera fixed inside the car. Unless you turn, the stars can't move. We felt we had to take the liberty of using a three-dimensional star field. Otherwise it would look like our characters were all standing on stationary platforms out there, even though they might be going 10,000 miles an hour in their ships.

**FF:** Do you think that a format of "accepted rules for science fiction films" will become established, just as they once were for westerns?

**HALLER:** I'm sure they will be, though we haven't got that yet. We've talked about logic, yet a lot of times we just have to take liberties. People have discovered that you can't shake the reality of star movements unless you tamper with them a little bit. And you just cannot build excitement when you shoot cockpit footage with stationary stars. It isn't like you can have a car on process and throw some shadows like telephone poles or trees across it. And there are no clouds to go by like when you're shooting an airplane movie in process. We just had to take that liberty.

**FF:** Have you thought what this could mean to your career if the film takes off?

**HALLER:** Yes, but it doesn't really matter. I don't have stars in my eyes. I like working. I enjoy television. I enjoy the pace. I was brought up on a kind of hectic schedule along with Roger Corman, and I seem to work well that way. Not to say I wouldn't do a feature if I really liked it. I'm thinking about features again.

**FF:** What sort of films would you like to do?

**HALLER:** I would like to do science fiction. I'd like to do a nice horror story, going back to the kind of films I started off with. They're out of date, but they're a lot of fun. I guess deep down inside everyone of us there is the unconscious desire to get back to our roots. I think that's what I'd like to do as a director. ■

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# FIRST MEN I

## Ray Harryhausen's Contemporary Int



Article by ROY

f the several classic fantasy films brought about through the partnership of Ray Harryhausen and his longtime producer, Charles Schneer, "First Men In The Moon," Harryhausen's tenth feature, is perhaps the most entertaining. Ray Harryhausen needs no introduction to devotees of fantasy cinema, for the name and work of this master model animator are nothing short of legend. Praiseworthy as Harryhausen's technical work may be, however, there is no denying that his films themselves leave much to be desired artistically. Even the most avid of Harryhausen's fans will admit that

Photos: at left, an insectivorous Salento manaces a terrified Katherine (Martha Hyer) through the porthole of Prof. Cavor's moonship. Below, Prof. Cavor cowers awkwardly across the moon's rough-hewn surface in his diver's suit.





# Series Presents: A New Look At IN THE MOON

Interpretation of H.G.Wells' Classic Tale

KINNARD

while there is very little fault to be found with his animation and process work, his films are just not very good movies—they often come across as being little more than demonstration reels of top-notch visual effects, and this is especially true of his most recent efforts.

Fortunately, however, there are exceptions to every rule, and there are more than a couple of Harryhausen films that succeed both as an example of special effects virtuosity, and as pleasing entertainment, and "First Men In The Moon" is undeniably one of those superior efforts.

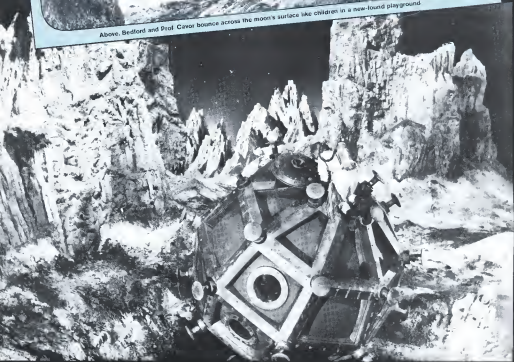
Shortly after completing production work on the 1963 classic "Jason

Photos: at right, Katherine (Martha Hyer), Bedford (Edward Judd) and Prof. Cavor (Lionel Jeffries) prepare for a rough landing on the moon. Below, Selander subdue a giant caterpillar-like "moon cat" with a crystalline ray projector.





Above, Bedford and Prof. Cavor bounce across the moon's surface like children in a new-found playground



Below, Cavor emerges from the open hatch as Bedford waits below in this closeup of their rick-studded vehicle.

And *The Argonauts*," Harryhausen was planning to film an adaptation of H.G. Wells' novel *"The Road Of The Gods"* when he met British writer Nigel Kneale, who, like Harryhausen, was a devotee of Wells' books. Harryhausen had wanted to film *"First Men In The Moon"*, produced once before in England as a 1919 silent picture, for quite a while, but his producer, Charles Schner, had not been enthusiastic about the idea. Schner felt that the concept did not contain enough variety, and he also objected to the story's period setting, maintaining that this would not appeal to a modern audience.

Kneale, however, was intrigued when he learned of the abandoned project, and together, he and Harryhausen were able to convince Schner of its box-office potential. Working with co-scripter Ian Read, Kneale chose to retain the charming period setting of Wells' story, placing the tale of a turn-of-the-century lunar expedition within the dramatic framework of a prologue and epilogue set in modern times. This clever device works well, making the story more entertaining and acceptable to a contemporary audience.

The movie opens in the present, as the international crew of "United Nations One," an expeditionary ship launched from Earth, leave their vessel as they make the first manned landing on the moon, claiming the satellite for the United Nations. The astronauts explore the moon's craggy surface, and they are astounded when they happen to find a tattered British flag and a legal summons addressed to a woman named Katherine Calendar.

The mystified astronauts transmit a picture of the discovered objects back to Earth, and officials in Britain immediately trace Katherine Calendar, only to learn that she has passed away, but that she had been married to Arnold Bedford, now an old man committed to a retirement home. It seems that Bedford has always claimed that he once journeyed to the moon years ago, and, needless to say, his sanity had been in serious question—until now. Visiting Bedford at the rest home, the fascinated officials listen as he tells them his incredible story.

At the turn of the century, Bedford, a writer down on his financial luck, visits his fiancée Katherine Calendar at her home in the country. While there, he happens to meet another local resident named Cavor, an eccentric and flamboyant scientist who has discovered an incredible substance—an anti-gravity paint! Having constructed a large "space-sphere," Cavor intends to use his miraculous discovery, which he has decided to call Cavorite, in order to launch the sphere from his greenhouse and actually fly to the moon. Painting movable shutters on the sphere's windows with Cavorite, he plans to open and close them at appropriate intervals, and in this way utilize the gravita-

tional forces of the Earth, moon and sun in order to control his trajectory.

On a great deal of money, and seeing the possibility of earning millions from Cavorite, Bedford agrees to accompany Cavor on his journey to the moon. Katherine is displeased with Bedford's decision, and is even more disturbed when she later receives a summons legally obligating her for her fiancée's debts. Distressed and angered, she goes to see Bedford at Cavor's home and finds the two men in the greenhouse, sealed inside the sphere. Seconds before the vehicle is launched, she pounds on its surface in an effort to attract Bedford's attention,

Stepping out onto the barren lunar terrain, she men leap about in the lesser gravity of the moon, and they plant a British flag, leaving Katherine's summons near it as legal proof of their landing.

After further exploration, they accidentally crash through the surface of an odd, crystalline crater, and are amazed to discover that not only does the moon's interior have a breathable atmosphere, but that it is also inhabited—by four-foot-tall, two-legged insect-like creatures called Selentites. Calmly, Bedford immediately takes an aggressive position, and shows many of the Selentites that confront



Selentites activate their glowing crystalline ray projector as they attempt to subdue an object ("moon calf" (see photo, bottom of page 68))

and the men have no choice except to pull her inside in order to protect her from the violence of the approaching lift-off.

Immediately, the sphere begins to rumble as the Cavorite shutters negate the Earth's gravity, and it shoots upward at bullet speed, smashing through the roof of the greenhouse and hurtling away into space.

A cushioned interior protects the three travellers from the rough trajectory of the sphere, and when they reach the moon a few days later, the sphere's exterior bumpers absorb the shock of the turbulent landing, depositing the vehicle safely, if not gently, on the lunar surface.

Bedford and Cavor dress themselves in pressurized deep-sea diving suits ("what will keep water out will keep air in") and, not having a third suit, they leave Katherine in the sphere,

them off of a high ledge. A shocked Cavor objects to Bedford's reckless actions, but is forced to flee with him from the pursuing Selentites, and they return to the sphere, only to find it missing!

The sphere has been launched through a large hexagonal den, may constructed in the side of a cave, a wall, and, facing the stone doors upon Bedford and Cavor enter, following the trail left by the movement of the sphere. Suddenly, their investigation is halted as they are attacked by a giant centipede, a moon-calf, which the Selentites breed and raise for food, and Bedford and Cavor are saved from certain death only when the Selentites arrive and drive the huge creature away with blasts from electrical guns. Captured by the Selentites, Bedford and Cavor can now do nothing but accompany the aliens to their colony. Located near immense crystalline

of water, from which oxygen is extracted in order to produce the lunar atmosphere, the Selenite colony is socially divided between laborers and intellectuals.

Bedford and Cavor discover that Katherine has been imprisoned in a transparent observation chamber where she is being x-rayed and studied by insect scientists. Katherine is repulsed by the creatures, and enraged by the manner in which they are treating her, but Cavor's feelings are quite different—the inquisitive scientist is enthusiastic about using the opportunity to communicate with these strange beings. Bedford, however, is only concerned with Katherine's safety. Returning to the space-sphere, which has been partially disassembled by the curious Selenites, Bedford recovers an elephant gun that he had locked in the storage compartment, and he uses it to



will be no other visitors from the Earth, and that the Selenites are secure, since only he has the secret of Cavorite, and Bedford, overhearing this conversation, panics.

Bedford realizes that the Selenites now intend to keep the three of them on the moon, holding them prisoner in order to protect themselves from the human race, and so he callously shoots the benevolent Grand Lunar, in order to ensure a direct shot for their escape. Cavor, however, has absolutely no intention of leaving—he wishes to stay, and study the Selenites. Bedford and Katherine cannot leave the moon, though, unless Cavor helps them to reassemble the sphere. Insulted that Bedford would even consider asking for his assistance after the havoc that he has wrought, Cavor reluctantly agrees, finally realizing that he has no

force the Selenites to free Katherine from her prison.

Cavor, meanwhile, has been presented to the eerie Grand Lunar, the bulbous-headed ruler of the moon, and the monarch asks Cavor to tell him of the Earth and its people. Cavor does so, but in his narrative, he makes the error of mentioning the human practice of war to the leader of the Selenites. War is a concept unknown to the people of the moon, and the notion of organized violence causes the Grand Lunar to react with great concern, for he fears that others will soon come to the moon, bringing their aggressiveness with them. Cavor reveals to him that there



Photos, this page: top, Prof. Cavor and Katherine, surrounded by Selenites, listen to the voice of the Grand Lunar as he speaks to them through one of his amazing crystalline projectors. Middle, Cavor ponders his fate as Selenites scurry around him. Bottom, Bedford and Katherine stoop carefully between rows of sleeping Selenites who have melamorphosed into a cocoon-like state of suspended animation.



right to force Bedford and Katherine to remain on the moon with him.

Cavor helps them to repair the sphere, but remains firm in his decision to remain behind. Bedford and Katherine then bid farewell to Cavor, and activating the space-sphere, they lift off from the moon, landing in the ocean upon reaching the Earth several days later. Unfortunately for the two lovers, however, the sphere sinks without a trace, leaving them with no proof whatsoever of their bizarre journey.

As Bedford ends his story, the officials turn on a television set in order to show the old man live coverage of the moon landing. On the television, the astronauts have entered the Selenite caverns, and the lunar civilization is dead, silent and decaying. There is no sign of life, and the mystified scientists

on Earth finally realize that Cavor's visit to the moon introduced terrestrial germs, there—bacteria against which the Selenites had no immunity.

"Poor Cavor," mutters the aged Bedford, "he did have such a dreadful cold ..."

An intelligent and refreshing change from the usual zap-happy content of most space-fantasy movies, "First Men In The Moon" contains wit and romance in addition to the fantasy element, and these are important qualities that are all too often sadly lacking in the science fiction field. This successful blending of these elements can be traced directly to Nigel Kneale and Jan Read's thoughtful script, which is several cuts above the usual material that Harryhausen is given to work with. Although, as mentioned previously, Kneale's screenplay retains the original period setting, just enough of Wells'



novel was changed so that the story would appeal to a modern audience.

Wells in the novel, for instance, suggested that the moon had a natural atmosphere. At the turn of the century, when astronomical knowledge was not commonplace, such a concept was workable. But by the early 60s, the public's everyday knowledge of science had increased to such an extent that Wells' fanciful description of the lunar air had to be changed to the film's more plausible depiction of an artificially generated subterranean atmosphere.

In addition, Wells' novel, and even the original shooting script of the film, did not have a woman accompanying Bedford and Cavor on their interplan-

Photos, this page: top, a horde of Selenites swarms over the framework of Cavor's moonship as they attempt to dismantle it for study. Middle, Bedford and Katherine ward off the Selenites while escaping to the safety of the reconstructed moonship. Bottom, Selenites aim their ray projector at Bedford as he pushes the fanatic Prof. Cavor away from him during his escape.

tary journey. In order to generate more mass appeal, however, a change was deemed necessary, and Martha Hyer's character was included in the script. As long as these changes in the original novel had to be made, it is well that they were executed with such care and attention to detail, and in all probability, this adaptation of Wells' book is much closer to the author's original conception than it would have been in the hands of less competent creators.

Director Nathan Juran, who directed this film as well as Harryhausen's earlier "Seventh Voyage Of Sinbad," was mainly a routine filmmaker, whose career of turning out low-budget, second-rate features made for a competent, but generally unimpressive output. The two films that Juran directed for Harryhausen, however, represent his best work, and his contribution to "First Men In The Moon" keeps the film moving at a brisk and steady pace, only proving that the flamboyant aspects of the fantasy genre probably provide the extra creative spark needed to raise the product of otherwise un distinguished craftsmen above the routine level.

As always, Ray Harryhausen approached the technical aspects of his production with financial austerity. "First Men In The Moon" was Harryhausen's first (and last, to date) project to be filmed in Panavision. Panavision is a standard wide-screen process that "squeezes," or anamorphosizes the film image when it is photographed on 35mm film. An opposite lens then corrects this optical distortion when the film is shown in a theater, and a wide-screen image results. Because of the great difficulties encountered in using rear-screen photography in the Panavision process, however, Harryhausen did not want to use the wide-screen technique, but the higher echelon executives at Columbia Pictures were adamant in their feeling that Panavision would be a definite box-office asset to the film. So Harryhausen reluctantly agreed.

Using an economic frugality that made the most of a relatively limited budget without detracting from the visual richness of the production, Harryhausen constructed most of the film's seemingly immense sets in intricately detailed miniature form, placing his actors within these artificial surroundings by means of the blue-screen matte process. Some portions of the sets were built full-size when close-up or medium distance shots of the performers were needed, but whenever a huge set is seen in the film, it is usually only one of Harryhausen's finely crafted miniatures.

The moonscapes seen during the explorer's first contact with the lunar surface were constructed actual size, however, and to save money on sound stage rental fees, the terrain was built on a silent stage without soundproofing at England's Shepperton studios. The footage for these scenes was shot silent, with dialogue and sound effects added later in the dubbing process. Cavor's quaint space-sphere was, of course, a full-sized mock-up, and it was necessary to use a large crane in order to transport the prop to the moonscape set. The sphere had been described by Wells in the novel as having been constructed out of an old diving bell and reinforced against the shock of landing



Bedford struggles to free himself of a piggy-back Selentite.

by "railroad bumpers," and Harryhausen designed the vehicle in close accordance with Wells' description.

The artistic designs of the sets in the film is very impressive, and makes use of "expressionism," the technique of deliberately exaggerating reality in order to achieve a surrealistic, larger-than-life dramatic effect. Expressionistic design was used most memorably in such classic films as "The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari," "Frankenstein," and "Citizen Kane," and here in "First Men In The Moon," its use is most effective in suggesting an alien environment—but a great deal of logic was also applied to the design. The Selentites are insect-like, for instance, so their door apertures are shown as being hexagonal, similar to a bee's honey comb.

Never a supporter of the cheap and generally unconvincing technique of using actors in costumes to represent creatures of myth and fantasy, Harryhausen was nevertheless forced to use

this approach for a few scenes in the film. Many sequences demanded that large crowds of Selentites be depicted, and rather than fall back on the unsatisfying alternative of populating the moon with only three or four animated inhabitants, Harryhausen and his crew dressed child actors in Selentite costumes, animating only the close-ups of individual creatures.

Thanks to the moody, low-key lighting used in the cavern scenes, this technique was successful, not to mention the fact that it saved Harryhausen from the maddening eternity that it certainly would have taken him to animate dozens of models simultaneously! The more skeletal Selentite intellectuals were completely animated, though, as well as the Grand Lunar, and this succeeded in imparting a genuinely eerie appearance to these particular characters, as well as reinforcing the social divisions between them and the costumed actors who portrayed the "worker" Selentites.

Harryhausen's animation in this film is, as almost always, very smooth and convincing. The gigantic "moon-calf" centipede creature, in actually a stop-motion model only a couple of feet long, is particularly awesome on screen, and Harryhausen has said that this is one of the most difficult models he has ever animated, because of the many different segments that compose its body.

Surprisingly, for a film of such obvious high quality, "First Men In The Moon" was not very successful when it was initially released. The exact reasons for its middling performance at the box office are unclear, and Harryhausen has gone on record as saying that it was perhaps the inclusion of too much light-hearted comedy relief that disappointed a public that took a very serious view of real-life space exploration.

More likely, this entertaining film was just not promoted properly by Columbia, but whether Harryhausen's theory is correct or not, the following story indicates just how artistically and dramatically successful "First Men In The Moon" really is.

Five years after the film was made, Neil Armstrong and his fellow Apollo 11 astronauts were approaching the moon in preparation for a real-life lunar expedition. Harryhausen's opening scene for "First Men In The Moon," intricately shot using miniature spacecraft models supported by aerial braces and animated frame-by-frame, depicted a fictional moon-landing, and this sequence was so realistic, that television stations used the scene on the air as a dramatization of the actual event!

CREDITS: A 1964 Columbia Pictures release filmed in color and Panavision. PRODUCED BY: Charles Schneer. ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Ray Harryhausen. SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS CREATED BY: Ray Harryhausen. SCREENPLAY WRITTEN BY: Nigel Kneale and Jun Reed. DIRECTED BY: Nathan Juran. THEATRICAL RUNNING TIME: 107 minutes. CAST: Edward Judd (as Bedford), Lionel Jeffries (as Cavor), and Martha Hyer (as Katherine), with Erik Chitty, and an unbilled cameo appearance by Peter Finch.

# FANTASTIC FILMS

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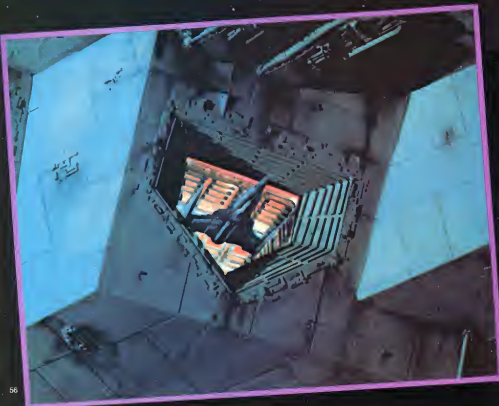
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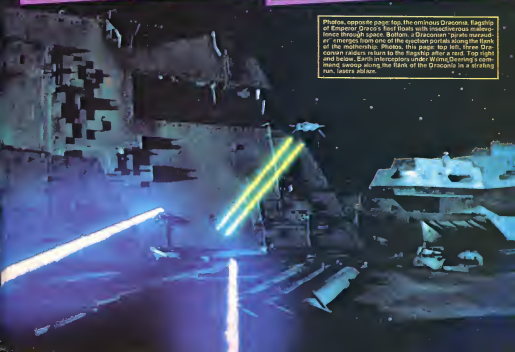
**Battleships  
and  
Battlescenes  
from  
Buck Rogers**







Photos, opposite page: top, the ominous Draconis, flagship of Emperor Draco's fleet floats with insatiable malevolence through space. Bottom, a Draconian "pirate marauder" emerges from one of the ejection portals along the flank of the mothership. Photos, this page: top left, three Draconian raiders return to the flagship after a raid. Top right and below, Earth interceptors under Wills Deering's command swoop along the flank of the Draconis in a strafing run, lasers ablaze.



# ROBERT WISE

(Continued from Page 38)

its cage. The monkey couldn't breathe and he started to choke to death. All that agony was just simply his trying to get air. At the precise moment that he keeled over and was about to go, Jim picked him up and rushed him outside of the set through a little door and a vet flashed the monkey with oxygen.

**FF:** Every time I see that, I squirm.

**WISE:** We didn't lose a monkey or a rat. Good stuff, wasn't it?

**FF:** When we interviewed Douglas Trumbull for *Fantastic Films*, we talked about his getting the equipment for *Silent Running*. He said he owed it all to you because you showed him how to get equipment on loan. Have you always obtained so much equipment gratis? The credits for donations on *Andromeda Strain* run half a page.

**WISE:** I've never been involved with industrial deals to such a degree, before or since.

**FF:** But you have made fairly impressive arrangements on other films. In the script for *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, you have a list of the things the Army was loaning you—82 men, two howitzers.

**WISE:** I've gone to the service for things, sure. But I hadn't had too many dealings with regular commercial films before *Andromeda Strain*. Yet we needed the real thing there, and we used about two and a half million dollars worth of equipment. We couldn't even attempt to mock up all that stuff, like an electron microscope. I didn't even make the deals, I left it to this lovely guy at Universal who specialized in contacting companies. He was a good talker, a goo promoter, and he handled all of that. He found companies, made the deals, got the time schedule worked out, got the insurance, paid for the freight in and out and even arranged for some of their technicians to come and set the equipment up and stand by.

**FF:** The finale is a fascinating, exciting sequence, with James Olson trying to go up the central ladder to shut down the reactor. As he climbs, a series of lasers meant to kill stray animals shoot at him. Did you use real lasers to shoot that?

**WISE:** We certainly did. There was a firm down in Santa Monica which provided us with lasers, and we had to be very careful to keep our eyes out of the way.

**FF:** Was it a particularly difficult sequence to shoot?

**WISE:** Well, we had a lot of trouble with the lasers. We were in and out of that sequence four, five, six times because the lasers worked fine when they were on a kind of even keel, but they died when they were tilted up some. In addition, we had to put a lot of smoke in the core to pick them up 'cause if you don't have something for the beam to go through, you won't pick it up photographically. The smoke was written into the script as a gas leak. But our troubles didn't end there. We found that the smoke, circulating around the tilted lasers was fouling up the mechanism. It was a very troublesome sequence to shoot, but we got to use actual lasers.

**FF:** Had you considered shooting it a different way?

**WISE:** Only for a short time. My main interest was just getting it successfully accomplished, but we knew it would be ter-

rribly difficult. Because it was getting so complicated, at one time we were considering the possibility of animating the men and doing it that way. But I resisted because we'd had so much real technology in our film that I hated to have any kind of feeling that we were using photographic tricks.

**B**efore making "The Hindenberg," I had to be convinced that we could actually make the thing look 'real,' or I couldn't take it on.

## THE HINDBENBERG (1976)

**FF:** Did you have any misgivings about making *The Hindenberg*?

**WISE:** Well, when Universal Studios asked me if I would be interested in taking on the film, my first question had to be, "Can we do it?" I read the book and got fascinated by it, but I wondered if we could successfully resurrect or reincarnate the Hindenberg. Could we have this marvelous 803-foot-long Zeppelin on the ground at Frankfurt? Could we get her in the air? Could we fly her over the land? Could we fly her over the ocean? Could we bring her by Manhattan and New York? Could we take her into Lakehurst? And could we eventually do away with her? We figured that unless we could convincingly do it, we couldn't take it on.

**FF:** What influenced you to take it on?

**WISE:** I went to talk with Al Whitlock, who is the master-of-masters of matte painting and trick visual effects. He is an absolute wizard, a genius, and he happens to be on the lot there at Universal. I said, "You know the project. You know the book. You know what the challenges are. Can we do it? Can it be brought to life believably with all the techniques of miniature work and a combination of mattes, paintings, traveling mattes, and maybe some new techniques that you haven't even used at this point?" We discussed it and he convinced me it could be done, but it would require very careful planning. We would have to spend months and months in planning, making sketches and discussing what the component parts of each shot would be.

**FF:** How did you proceed from that meeting? Did you set some people to do research while you began developing the script?

**WISE:** When I decided to take it on, my biggest problem was to find a handle on the material, a workable storyline that would involve an audience. Interest them, maybe hold them in suspense towards an ending they knew was going to happen. We had to come up with something like

that, otherwise we couldn't sustain the tension for what would be an hour and 45 minutes 'til the disaster. Once that was underway I started doing major initial research myself in Washington. My production designer, Edgar Fontana, had worked with me years before at MGM on *Executive Suite*. And we got into the nitty gritty. **FF:** Did you spend a great deal of time researching it?

**WISE:** Oh yes. I started preliminary research in the Fall of '73. We moved ahead full force on our research about late January, February of '74. I flew abroad with my production designer and over a period of ten months to a year went to all the places that we could, researching and pulling material together about how to build it. We dug out everything we could to bring back for our sketch artist, Whitlock and the men who were building the 25-foot miniature of the Hindenberg.

**FF:** There are several things about the real Hindenberg which struck me as being ahead of their time. For instance, the whole structure of the ship was built out of aluminum. Was that because it was light or because it didn't strike sparks?

**WISE:** No, primarily because it was light. Weight was a big, big factor with zeppelins, and everything was as light as possible. Everything that could be made was made of aluminum. The furniture, the chairs, like 200 chairs you could lift with one hand. The body of the small baby grand piano in the lounge only weighed 250 pounds, something like that. Everything they did was directed towards the matter of lightness, but with strength.

**FF:** We also noticed that in the crew's quarters, the doors were just sliding pieces of canvas instead of metal or wood. It reminded me of a submarine. Did you work from the original blueprints of the Hindenberg in building the sets and models?

**WISE:** No, we couldn't get those. We wanted very much to get back to the original blueprints and drawings, but they were all lost in the war. That was a major problem for us. We had to scrounge for all of our detail about the building of her from sketches and drawings in books, photographs and verbal descriptions by people who knew her. We were fortunate in finding a technical advisor who had been with Goodyear at the time. He had been sent by Goodyear to observe the building of the Hindenberg, and he had made and kept a book of notes and little detail drawings. That was of enormous help to my art director, but we also literally had to scrounge every place we could. We started in Washington at the Smithsonian and the National Archives and then went over to Germany to dig into their archives and museums.

**FF:** Had you considered shooting the film in Europe at any time?

**WISE:** Not really, because the major physical requirement we had was to have giant hangars that could have accommodated the Hindenberg. There were just no big hangars abroad because they were destroyed during the war. When we looked at the original one in Lakehurst, New Jersey, half the interior was covered by a mock-up of a flight deck of an aircraft carrier. They used it to train crews because it's a naval station.

**FF:** Audiences had to see the size of the hangar? How big was it?

**WISE:** About a thousand feet long. Fortu-

nately, there were two of them in Santa Ana near Los Angeles. They were built in the early part of the war for our lighter-than-air blimps—security surveillance things off the coast, but they were big enough to have handled the Hindenberg. We had to spend quite a lot of time negotiating, because it's a Marine helicopter station now. Those hangars are used for helicopters, and they didn't fancy having to shut down their operation while we came down to make a movie, although they were kind of intrigued by the idea. We finally revised our demands and made some adjustments and they gave a little bit and cleared the front end of both hangars for us. The two of them were good for us because one was for Frankfurt and one was for Lakehurst. So the locations were really dictated by the availability of the hangars.

**FF:** Do you find that you've had two separate types of careers? One where you've taken projects, nourished them, built them up and slowly developed them, and others where you've just been handed a script to direct?

**WISE:** Right! But there've been a bit too many of the latter. Of course when I first started it was all that. They were all scripts that were done and I was asked to come in and direct. The first one I had any part in the development of was *Blood on the Moon*, my first "A" picture. The producer, who was a friend of mine and an ex-editor too, developed the script with the writer and me on that. A lot of my films, even after I had become a producer-director and had my own productions, had come to me as first-draft scripts. Sound of Music had an first draft script when I came on it. On the other hand, *West Side Story* didn't. However, on that project I was called. I didn't call, I didn't say, "Hey I want to do it." United Artists had it and called one day and said, "We'd like you to think about doing *West Side*." When I accepted the assignment, I was responsible for working with the writer to get the screenplay.

**FF:** You can't really guess when *Star Trek* will end, but before this was the Hindenberg the longest production you've worked on?

**WISE:** Yes, although *The Sand Pebbles* took a long time as well. From the time I started it went over a period of about three, four years. I had the book, then I got a script, and they we didn't know where we could make it, and I knew it was going to be a long time. But while that was going on I did *The Sound of Music*, then came back to *The Sand Pebbles* so although it stretched over a period of three-four years, when I finally actually started on it it took about 20 months.

**FF:** When you're laying out a film, do you storyboard important sequences long before shooting them?

**WISE:** I've worked with a storyboard sketch artist on many films over the years starting with *The Set-Up*. He would come to my office and we'd discuss a scene. He'd make quick pencil sketches of ideas we'd had of set-ups, compositions, camera moves and what not. Sometimes we'd try to act it out in the office in terms of what our set would be. He'd go away and do small readable sketches, nothing fancy.

Through a series of meetings, changing and adapting the sketches, we developed that whole picture, except for the fights which were choreographed in long rehearsals. *The Set-Up* was probably shot 95 percent to the sketches.

**FF:** You really believe in careful pre-production.

**WISE:** It's terribly important, because if you do a lot of planning and preparation you know where you're going. It saves time on your schedule and of course that's always the big thing. Your big cost in any film is when you start shooting because

## The biggest problem is to develop a workable storyline that will hold an audience, especially when they know the ending already, like in "The Hindenberg."

then you have all the actors and crew on salary, and all the expenses are mounting up. You want to move as fast as you can on the day-to-day shooting of your film. If you are well-prepared with sketches and know where you're going, then it saves time. You don't have to fool around and wonder what to do. I don't want to sound like I'm looking into everything I say, because occasionally I'll do something in advance, but when I get on the set it just doesn't look the way I imagined it would in the office. If something is unnatural, unreal, or an actor feels uncomfortable at doing something that you thought he would do in the office, you always have to leave yourself room to adjust and change and improve within what you wanted.

**FF:** You spent a year in editing, putting in all the mattes, miniatures and opticals on *The Hindenberg*.

**WISE:** Yeah, yeah, getting together all the special visual effects shots, the music score and the dubbing, which was very tricky.

**FF:** Back to Robert Wise, sound effects editor, transeer?

**WISE:** We wanted to capture the sound of all aspects of the ship as closely as we could. We wanted to hear that metal working and creaking. That's one of the things my technical advisor said. "When you're in that hole, that metal's working constantly it's not weak or anything, but it's just the way that metal will work." So we spent weeks on that. We had a couple of sneak previews and when we came back we cut four or five minutes out of the film then re-did about three-fourths of the sound job. We found it to be unsatisfactory once we got into a theatre. That always happens.

**FF:** How did you approach the matte shots?

**WISE:** When you do a matte shot, you want to have something real in there. Too sometimes, like with a miniature, you can't. We had some full mattes in there where the Hindenberg is in the distance and we had clouds over the water. The ship was painted in and moved on the glass. But when you have any kind of matte shot that is full and close you need

some part of it to be real. So, for instance, when the ship is outside the hangar in Frankfurt in that marvelous day shot, a piece of the hangar was real, the field's real, the people standing in front were real. What Al Whitlock did was take our miniature outside and get a still picture of it in exactly the perspective and position it should be, with the sun hitting it exactly the right way so it would match into the sun in our other shot. When the two elements were joined, they matched perfectly.

**FF:** You only built one 25 foot miniature. Isn't that unusual?

**WISE:** At one time we wondered about possibly making a smaller one, an eight foot one for longer shots, but Al thought he could successfully paint those. That other miniature would have been an extra expense and meant more time for us.

**FF:** You built huge sections of the ship on sound stages?

**WISE:** Oh, all over the place. Full-size reproductions of various areas of the ship in which we played our scenes and in which we show how things were. We had an exact replica, a set of the control car which hung underneath, kind of like the bridge. Then we built the passengers' quarters, the foyer and the corridors with the little cabins. Each cabin had two bunks and running water. People had nice stylish comfort. We did a marvelous 50 foot long dining room, a lounge and a writing room with all the decor and the furniture, the rugs, the colors that matched exactly to the real thing. The smoking room was on the 'B' deck, below where they also had toilets and the kitchen which supplied marvelous food. They had an electric kitchen and the food went up on a dumb-waiter to the 'A' deck, above for the dining room. We also built great sections of the hull which was mammoth. Everything worked. We had catwalks and little catwalks and air shafts and the nosecone. We built, if I may say so, exact reproductions. People who have seen the film who knew the Hindenberg are absolutely astounded at the authenticity of it.

**FF:** Did you decide from the very beginning to try and build it exactly as it was or did you debate making changes to make it easier to photograph?

**WISE:** No. I try never to make that accommodation. We said, "Whatever the size is that's going to be it. We're going to work in these things and make it work." I did that years ago on a submarine picture I made called *Run Silent, Run Deep*. Submarines are very crowded, but up to that time they had usually made the sets and the quarters a little larger for convenience of working. I went down to San Diego and visited a submarine down there like the one we were going to use and the first thing that hit me was, "My God, how cramped it is. How small it is. What small quarters, what a small area." So I said to the art director when I came back, "I want our sets built just the size they are on a real ship because I want the audience to feel the sense of what these men feel. And I think that's the only way to go. I think you tend to make things a little larger anyway if you photograph something with a wide angle lens. It tends to open it up and expand it a little bit. If you also make the sets larger because you need the wide angle then you're not representing the real thing. So it's always been a principle of mine in the cases where actuality is very important to

get the real feel

**FF:** In building the control car or the submarine, did you construct a four-wall set and then have wild walls to shoot reverse shots? Did you have the complete set built?

**WISE:** Practically always, yes. Certainly on the control car we did, but you do have to prepare, and this is one of the jobs the designer or art director has to do. It must be built so certain sections of it can lift out without too much trouble so you can get your camera in, shoot your reverse angles, then go back in quickly and take another piece out.

**FF:** How was the *Hindenberg* constructed? **WISE:** We had two sections that came out in the control car. For the dining room and the lounge and all those larger rooms, well, the ends came out of those. We had some wild walls there as, of course, in the little cabins, where we had two or three walls that would come out because you couldn't get a camera and two people in there. The only place we didn't have that was in the halls. We had to move some of the canvas around there, things like that.

**FF:** In shooting the "disaster" where the *Hindenberg* explodes, you used 11 cameras to cover every angle. That's far more than usual on an action sequence.

**WISE:** When you have an action sequence of any consequence or size, it's common practice to use three or four cameras. I used 11 on the burning of the nosecone in *The Hindenberg* because it was a one-shot thing. That was all we were going to get because we were going to burn the set out. We had to get it all nipped in advance. We had stunt men all protected with suits and masks and breathing oxygen and everything.

We had hidden cameras and "throw-away cameras" that were lost in the middle of the fire so if we right one it was only a hundred dollars. Everything had to be protected. Al Whitlock was clear up on the catwalks with a matte camera shooting down so he could get the flaming guy jumping out. Once we set fire to the set, we covered it with as many cameras as we could because that was the only time we were going to be able to get those shots.

**FF:** Did you decide to shoot the whole disaster sequence in black-and-white because you were going to match it with black-and-white newsreel footage of the actual *Hindenberg* burning?

**WISE:** The actual crash, when it happened, took 34 seconds from the time it caught on fire, 200 feet in the air. The carcass was on the ground. Of course, it burned for hours after that and they were trying to get people out and this, that and the other. But at the end of a two-hour film, you need something more than that for your disaster or tragic end. We knew we had to enlarge on that, so we got a device for stop-framing the sections of the actual newsreel footage every so often and going inside to show what might have gone on at that time. So we managed to stretch out the 34 second bit to a ten minute sequence.

**FF:** You felt it was necessary to include the famous newsreel footage of the crash?

**WISE:** Absolutely. There are tremendous talents working in visual-mechanical effects. They do tremendous things, but everybody said early on that even with all of our tricks, we would just not be able to re-stage anything that could come close to the reality of that actual thing. It was just too much. So we decided very early that

we just had to use the newsreels, because they were so well known and so real.

**FF:** Did you use a lot of newsreels for the on-ground footage as well?

**WISE:** All the long shots, yeah. That's all newsreel. Of course, any time you see material with my people in it, the actors have been dissolved in the stuff that I shot and then matched in and de-graded. We used over 700 opticals in that ten minutes of film to make it all match the newsreel's quality. Because we went from color to black-and-white we had to get the right shading, the right contrast and in some places had to have them optically move the camera a little bit and jiggle it around because some of my stuff was too static. When I shot the sequence I hadn't wanted to shake the cameras too much because then I would be stuck with it so I did a certain amount, and then we put in camera moves and stuff with the optical printer.

**FF:** Had you storyboarded the sequence to know how you were going to match your new footage with the newsreels?

**WISE:** Practically all of the material I shot was storyboarded to match in. Long before we started shooting, it was all worked out on a KEM editing table. I found it great to work with, I'm finally getting up-to-date, right? We had three newsreels to work from, but we only had two screens, so we borrowed a screen from Billy Friedkin's editor who also had a KEM. We ran our three newsreels through and tried to select the best pieces out of each one for our use. Then we could look at it with the sketch artist and say, "This is what we want to do with it." We made a few adjustments after we finished, but the majority was planned out.

**FF:** There were three newsreel cameras covering it?

**WISE:** Yeah. Universal, Paramount, and then we got some from 20th Century-Fox.

**FF:** Did you buy the rights for them?

**WISE:** I think we had to buy 20th's, but Universal owns Paramount's stuff now, so I think that's all in there. We had no problem getting it. The big problem was how to treat it. We had to blow it up and get the best quality we could, considering the degradation that's gone on over the years. That's one of the things that led us into black-and-white. First thought was maybe we could tint this successfully into a fine color and go that way. The lab did a decent job on that. I thought, but the minute you saw it, you felt a very heavy and obvious Hollywood hand had stepped in. All the grain and the scratches and the degradation that had developed over the years with black-and-white, that you accept in black-and-white as kind of the nifty gritty and reality just looked absolutely phony with the tint. Right away we said, "That's no good. We can't go that way." And that's why we went to black-and-white.

**FF:** That decision locked you into shooting the interiors in black-and-white during the crash as well?

**WISE:** Well, we had to be consistent. The reality of the picture at that point was black-and-white, so I had to match our stuff in. We felt we were doing it legitimately because we started the film with a little black-and-white newsreel featurette. We figured the concept would work.

**FF:** Was *The Hindenberg* the most storyboarded and choreographed film you've done? Knowing exactly what was going to happen throughout the film?

**WISE:** *The Hindenberg* was as fully sketched as anything I've ever done. And

I think goodness for it, because it was the most complex film I've ever done. The inner design of the ship, in terms of how the pieces went together in that hull, how that middle catwalk worked in relation to the others, where the airshaft went and how the whole ship moved and operated and went I would have been lost. I think I went back to my sketch book and script more often in the shooting of *The Hindenberg* than any other film just because of this complexity. The story sketches stood me in good stead, more than any other film, really.

**FF:** Doug Trumbull said that when they were shooting *CE3K*, they often had to go in days later and shoot a re-take because although they had the miniature planned to go across at a certain angle, when they shot the live action, the actors were looking at the wrong point. He'd have to go back and re-shoot to match.

**FF:** I'm sure we're going to have some of that on *Star Trek*, though I don't know to what degree. I'm not going to be able to have a lot of my special effects done while we're shooting, so we're going to have to fake it, and I'm not happy about it. I hope I can get some kind of computer readout or something, a simulation of what it's going to be so I can have something to line up on the screen.

I've known people who have gone to various places and found spectacular scenery. They've come to me and said, "Why don't you cook up some kind of a story, come here, and use our marvelous background?" And I say, "Look, that's not the point, the foreground's important. If I find the right foreground, that's really exciting and grabs me, then I'll come and use your background." The same holds with our special effects on *Star Trek*.

**FF:** Did you learn a great deal about special effects on *The Hindenberg*? Did that help you now?

**WISE:** Well, that was different, really. None of the effects on *The Hindenberg* were computer-generated. It was all basically done travelling matte and double exposure work by Whitlock, who is the past master at it. The only thing in common with the two films is the need for great coordination and communication and planning between the director and his first unit—that's the principal photography—and the special effects people. There must be a knowledge and a coming together of both sides so it doesn't look like two different teams did it. It all has to come into a whole, and of course that's what we did on *The Hindenberg*. We planned and worked very carefully with Al all the way through and we'll do the same thing with Bob Abel. I've got to meld the two units so that they are one for the story and the picture.

**FF:** Was your work on *The Hindenberg* largely responsible for your getting the directing post on *Star Trek*?

**WISE:** Oh yes. I think so. I think it was one of the obvious reasons Paramount contacted me for the film. Of course they knew I'd also had experience with other SF films and with a lot of "big" pictures. I think they felt they wanted somebody to come in on the project that had that kind of background and experience. I can't begin to give chapter and verse on everything that Abel and his guys will be doing over there with all that computer tie-in, but I know the basics of everything and know what needs to be done in terms of planning and coordination.

**FF:** Are you approaching *Star Trek* with a

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knowledge of the different planets and solar systems that are going to be involved? Are there going to be aliens of types we have not seen on the screen or types similar to *Close Encounters* or *Star Wars* or anything else in between?

**WISE:** No, nothing as bizarre or exotic in that sense. We'll have a few aliens, but a miniature number because we're fairly confined in terms of going to other planets. We do have a sequence early in the film where we pick up Spock again on Vulcan, but I think that's the only one we see. We'll see a few aliens around the exterior of the Starfleet base in San Francisco and there'll be a few aliens on the ship.

## AUDREY ROSE (1977)

**FF:** When you're thinking about doing a film that's based on a best-seller, do you feel obligated to keep things, or can you throw stuff away and use what you want?

**WISE:** Well, probably more than some. I feel an obligation to give as honest a representation of a book as I can. You always have length problems. Things have to be dropped because you would have a five-hour film if you shot the whole book. You have to do judicious cutting and editing to use the best of it. I feel an obligation not to bastardize a story which has been successful and has worked, but at the same time to the point where I have the feeling it's inviolate.

**FF:** When you're putting together projects, do you start casting in your mind or do you wait until it's fully financed and you see where you are?

**WISE:** It varies. Sometimes you know ahead of time sometimes you don't. In the case of *I Want to Live*, for instance, we knew Susan Hayward was going to play Barbara Graham and it helped us when writing the script. With *Audrey Rose* I think we didn't make any decision until we got our script pretty well worked out.

**FF:** When you're writing, is it easier if you know who's going to be in the lead? Do you not have to change the script to suit it to the actor?

**WISE:** Of course it's easier, but you can fall into a trap that way. You may get an ideal prototype and the writer will work with that person in mind. For instance one of the most important characters in *Audrey Rose* was the man who believes that his little daughter's soul is inhabiting that of another little girl. The quality of the man is like Montgomery Clift. Now for obvious reasons, we were not going to be able to cast Mr. Clift, but the writer thought of him as he wrote the screenplay. He put the qualities Clift had into the character, so Anthony Hopkins has an interesting time with it.

**FF:** There's also something which I've admired a great deal in your films. It seems you're used to bring out a scientific approach to science and science fiction. In some of the reviews of *The Andromeda Strain* critics said it was so realistic that it was like watching what was going on outside our doors.

**WISE:** I'm delighted to hear it.  
**FF:** But when you're doing it, do you have any reservations about that approach? *Audrey Rose* felt like a documentary a lot of the time. Especially in the clinical sequences. Is that something that you weigh at all?

**WISE:** Well, I suppose that maybe I get caught up in it too much, and maybe it's

not the best way to go, audience-wise. My most successful commercial films, I guess, have not been necessarily in that genre, although I try to make everything as believable as I can, even *Sound of Music*. *The Andromeda Strain* was a successful-enough film, but it didn't do big, big, big tremendous business like we had hoped and certainly *Audrey Rose* was a disappointment. So maybe my tendency to make things too real rather than violating reality a bit and maybe supercharging some excitement into sequences, doesn't realize my fullest potential audience. But I'm afraid that's the way I'm out.

## STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE (1979?)

**FF:** You've always had long, elaborate pre-production periods on your films before they've started shooting, but that wasn't the case in *Star Trek*?

**WISE:** I'm not happy about the short amount of time I had on *Star Trek*. I came into a situation that was already set in many areas. That's very unusual for me. I'd never worked this way before, and it was kind of a strange feeling. In my learning to deal with it, finding ways in which I can alter things that have already been set. Since I couldn't start from scratch I've tried to upgrade things and improve them so they'll all come out looking like they belong in the same film.

**FF:** Were you very familiar with the *Star Trek* series before you came onto the film?

**WISE:** I was never a real Trekkie. I had to see a few *Star Trek* episodes to refresh myself before I took the assignment. One of the show's strengths, and this is true about SF in general, is that it's an upbeat thing. The stories had something positive to say about man and his ability to overcome whatever his problems are, to survive and go on. People who have analyzed the series feel very strongly that it is one of the big pluses of the series and what made it as popular as it has been.

**FF:** Do you think there might be some kind of culture shock because so many of the people in your audience will have seen the series and will see the characters are ten years older?

**WISE:** There will be some problems with age, but that's all covered in the script. We begin the film several years after the TV "mission" ended and catch up with the characters and what they've been doing. It really comes down to our being able to grab our audience at the beginning of the film, then holding them and keeping the excitement level right up there. If we can do that, I don't think people will think about the age difference.

**FF:** With the script on *The Andromeda Strain*, your previous films have had a minimum of the spectacular and spectacular effects. Are you at all hesitant about the massive and perhaps even overwhelming amount of special effects that are going to be in *Star Trek*?

**WISE:** No. I'm not really concerned about it. I'm only concerned with one thing—not enough time to prepare it all. This isn't very interesting for your story, but we all had six months' work to do in three months. That was our major problem. The challenge of doing the effects and getting them up there and dealing with them is no problem for me. The time I have to do them in that everybody has to do them in, is the problem. But I want to make one point that is very important. There is nothing more

important on any film than the foreground, the actors, the story. That's what we worked on like a son-of-a-gun. We had to be sure that the story we put in front of these marvelous photographic effects was going to be worthy of them and hopefully hold its own against the special photographic effects and not suffer by comparison.

We have one very interesting new character we added, a Delian woman who's completely bald. She's terribly sexy and highly charged so much so that they have to take an oath of celibacy when they climb on board. She's going to be a very interesting character. We have a lovely Indian actress named Persis Khambatta for that role. Since we reworked the script I think we got a lot more mileage out of her character. But we won't have anything as bizarre as the wonderful characters in the bar scene in *Star Wars*. That was one of the most brilliant sequences I'd ever seen.  
**FF:** There were some pretty strange characters in the *Star Trek* series. An alligator man, a subterranean stone creature, all sorts of Flash Gordon stuff.

**WISE:** Yeah, they were kind of Flash Gordon. We're being a little more reserved.

**FF:** How about the visuals? Do you ever find on a film that after the sets are built you want to change things entirely? Have you done so here?

**WISE:** I try to anticipate everything, but since I came on late I had to make changes in the *Star Trek* sets. They'd already built the model sets based on the TV series, but upgraded for a new TV series. And then it was decided after three years to make it into a feature film, so the sets needed to be upgraded in terms of their look and texture and feel. They weren't designed to be big screen, so I changed things. But I also couldn't violate what they had. It was an abnormal situation for me. I've never come into as ongoing a situation as this. I had sets built without me, a whole troupe of actors, even the Indian lady. Normally this kind of thing doesn't happen with me because I work very carefully and very closely with my set designer in terms of the set and how I'm going to shoot it and what he's going to build and what's going to be wild and what can double around and make a reverse end or whatever. I've never been obliged to say "That's all wrong, we'll have to change it." It just hasn't happened.

**FF:** What were you able to change in pre-production?

**WISE:** Primarily the script. I was able to make what I considered to be necessary changes. In addition, one of the first things I decided on was to not use any of the old costumes. I wanted to get some new things going but not so far different that they would violate *Star Trek*. The basic thing is that they have to look much better than they did on TV. Finally, in pre-production I had some input with Abe.

**FF:** Do you feel the pressure of all those *Star Trek* fans out there?

**WISE:** We get interesting letters in here which say "Don't you dare change one thing in that." Another letter says, "Thank God you're making a film. Now it can look right and real and proper." So I'm challenged and I think that we're all into it. Gene as well, and we have to find that middle ground where we can upgrade it and still not bastardize. That's really the big challenge all of us have. It's similar to adapting a best-seller, because there are so many preconceptions to deal with yet I've still got to tell this story. ■

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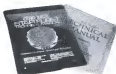
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